## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 278 012 CS 210 168

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TITLE Developing the Language Arts Curriculum (A Collection of Essays).

PUB DATE [85]

NOTE 194p.

PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Collected Works - General (020)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC08 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Basic Skills; Creative Writing; *Curriculum Development; Educational Philosophy; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Curriculum; *English Curriculum; Grammar; Handwriting; *Language Arts; Linguistics; Listening; Poetry; *Reading Instruction; Reading Writing Relationship; Speech Communication; Spelling; *Writing (Composition)

ABSTRACT

Ranging across the language arts spectrum in the elementary school curriculum, this compilation of 36 essays is divided into eight main sections: (1) issues, theory, and philosophy of a language arts curriculum; (2) reading (includes "Developing the Reading Curriculum," "Determining Reading Levels," and "Reading: Basics versus Problem Solving)"; (3) handwriting; (4) spelling (offers strategies and activities for improving spelling, and the suggestion that spelling can be correlated with other curriculum areas in the school/class setting); (5) linguistics (deals with patterns of sequences, expanding sentences, stress, pitch and juncture, and generating new sentences) and grammar (especially structural grammar); (6) oral communication (subdivided as creative expression in oral communication, and oral communication and the psychology of learning); (7) listening (focuses on diagnosis, the pupil and listening); and (8) writing and composition--the most extensive section (offers, among others, material entitled "Writing Achievement and the Basics," " The Child and Writing," "Creative Writing," and "Poetry in the Elementary School"). (NKA)

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# DEVELOPING THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM
## (A Collection of Essays)

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## THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM: A PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Which objectives should pupils achieve in the language arts? The language arts curriculum may be perceived as emphasizing practical learnings for student attainment. Toward the other end of the continuum, an essentialist or basics curriculum may be stressed.

### Practical Learnings in the Language Arts

There are selected educators who believe that the language arts should emphasize utilitarian objectives. What is useful in society needs adequate emphasis in the school curriculum. Thus, school and society become integrated, not separate entities. The language arts emphasizes students becoming proficient in four vocabularies--listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Critical, thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving skills need inclusion within the framework of developing the four vocabularies.

Which objectives then might be emphasized in a language arts curriculum, emphasizing the concept of practicality?

1. writing business letters to order needed goods and services. An ample number of addresses can be located to which students may write and receive actual responses to their letters.

2. writing friendly letters to peers, friends, and relatives. Again, students should receive a response to each letter written.

3. writing announcements. The announcements written need to deal with lifes's situations in and of themselves. Thus, learners may write announcements to their parents involving open house in school, parent-teacher conferences, national school lunch week, and parent-teacher organization meetings.

4. writing thank you notes for birthday and holiday gifts received.

5. writing letters of sympathy to persons who are ill or families who have experienced death.

6. filling data in properly into job application forms.

7. writing letters of application in order to secure a job.

8. using the telephone properly emphasizing flexible viable rules.

9. learning appropriate concepts and generalizations involving income tax forms. Students may receive practice completing the forms when readiness permits.

10. being able to introduce individuals to each other properly. Functional situations exist when parents, visitors, and new students come to the class setting.

11. conversing with others in functional situations, such as in the school lunchroom, as well as before the school day begins and after it ends.

12. being a proficient member in a discussion group. Real problems may be solved here, such as developing and implementing appropriate standards of conduct.

13. reading orally to others to convey needed information.

14. acquiring content from reading recipes in order to prepare food items.

15. reading directions to sew, construct, or repair an item.

16. listening critically and creatively to news items and utilizing the content to develop predictions.

Philosophical beliefs inherent in a utilitarian language arts curriculum emphasizes the significance of learners being able to utilize in society that which has been learned in the school curriculum. Society changes and thus the language arts must also change in scope and sequence. Perhaps, the curriculum as emphasized in the school and class setting needs to take the lead in changing society to reflect that which is worthwhile and relevant.

Much time is wasted in teaching-learning situations if learners cannot use and apply that which has been learned. Careful attention then needs to be given in selecting objectives, learning experiences, and appraisal procedures which truly emphasize useful subject matter. Process objectives are definitely in evidence in utilitarian objectives. With the mass amount of subject matter available to learners, it behooves the teacher to select those processes adequately comprehensive which guide learners to attain viable facts, concepts, and generalizations. Subject matter attained might become outdated, however, worthwhile processes (skills objective) will always be relevant in school and in society. Ediger[1] listed the following skills goals which may be incorporated into a functional language arts curriculum:

> 1. reading for a variety of purposes such as reading to acquire facts, generalizations, main ideas, sequence of ideas, as well as evaluate content, engage in divergent thinking, and solve problems.
> 2. identifying new words through the use of phonetic analysis, and configuration clues.
> 3. developing increased proficiency in the correct spelling of words.
> 4. writing for a variety of purposes such as in writing business letters, friendly letters, poems, stories, plays, announcements, thank-you notes and congratulatory messages.
> 5. developing increased skill in utilizing oral communication for a variety of purposes, such as in situations involving conversation, discussions, dialogs, panel presentations, creative dramatics, buzz groups, and oral reports.
> 6. working cooperatively with the teacher and other learners in developing recommended guidelines to be used in

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[1] Marlow Ediger, The Elementary Curriculum, a Handbook. Kirksville, Missouri: Simpson Publishing Company, 1977, page 8.

evaluating learning experiences involving the use of oral communication.

7. developing increased skills in writing legibly in order to communicate written content effectively.

8. developing skills pertaining to the mechanics of writing such as in capitalization and punctuation.

9. using the concepts of stress, pitch, and juncture when communicating content to others.

10. utilizing diverse sentence patterns in writing such as the subject-predicate pattern, subject-predicate-direct object pattern, subject-linking verb-predicate adjective pattern, subject-linking verb-predicate noun pattern, and the subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object pattern.

11. developing proficiency in using various kinds of sentences such as interrogative, imperative, declarative, and exclamatory sentences.

12. developing increased skill in expanding sentences through compounding, modifying, subordinating, and using appositives.

13. being able to write diverse kinds of poetry such as couplets, triplets, free verse, quatrains, limericks, tankas, and others.

14. putting more of the child's own thoughts and feelings into creative story and poem writing.

15. developing an adequate reading, writing, speaking, and listening vocabulary.

## An Essentialist Language Arts Curriculum

Essentialists believe that the basics need to be emphasized in the curriculum. The basics generally is perceived of as containing the 3 r's (reading, writing, and arithmetic). Certainly, the language arts emphasizes heavily the first two (reading and writing) of the 3 r's. However, the listening, speaking, reading, and writing vocabularies are also inherent in the third r (arithmetic).

Essentialists attempt to eliminate frills and fads from the language arts. Only necessary, basic learnings need to be emphasized. Which objectives then need stressing in the language arts?

1. using proper punctuation marks in sentences, such as periods, question marks, exclamation points, commas, semi-colons, apostrophes, and colons.

2. writing paragraphs emphasizing the concept of coherence and

sequence.

3. listening to content involving a variety of purposes. The purposes include listening to acquire facts, directions, main ideas, and sequential content. Also, learners need to listen critically, creatively, as well as to solve problems.

4. emphasizing proper capitalization and usage in writing sentences and paragraphs.

5. mastering words from lists in basal spelling textbooks as well as spelling words correctly in formal writing situations.

6. using legible handwriting. Legibility involves correct letter formation, spacing letters properly within and between words, proper slant of letters, and appropriate alignment of content.

7. mastering the rules of grammar in order to speak and write in meaningful ways.

8. reading proficiently. To identify words correctly, pupils need to master phonics, syllabication, structural analysis, context clues, and configuration clues. Also diverse kinds of reading comprehension need emphasizing. These include reading to secure factual content, understand directions, determine sequence of ideas, and select main ideas. Learners also need to achieve comprehension skills in reading to solve problematic situations, as well as to read critically and creatively.

9. speaking proficiently using a variety of purposes. These include giving directions clearly, discussing proficiently, introducing individuals to others, debating effectively, giving impromptu speeches in an interesting manner, reading orally in a proficient manner, and presenting facts meaningfully to others.

10. developing a will/desire to achieve optimally in listening,

speaking, reading, and writing.

Essentialists believe that basal learnings for each student to attain can be identified. What is basic needs emphasizing in the language arts curriculum. Interest within students for learning is not, by any means, a sole determiner in terms of selecting objectives, learning activites, and evaluation procedures for student attainment. The student must also reach out and achieve vital goals. There are objectives needing attainment regardless of inherent student interest and purpose. Thus, the will of the pupil is significant to emphasize in the teaching arena.

The late William Chandler Bagley[2] (1874-1946) wrote about the following incorrect trends in education:

> (a) The complete abandonment in many school systems of *rigorous standards of scholastic achievement* as a condition of promotion from grade to grade, and the passing of all pupils "on schedule."
> (b) The *disparagement of system and sequence in learning* and a dogmatic denial of any value in, even of any possibility of learning through, the logical, chronological, and causal relationships of learning materials.
> (c) The wide vogue of the so-called "*activity movement*."
> (d) The *discrediting of the exact and exacting studies*.
> (e) An increasingly *heavy emphasis upon the* "*social studies*."
> (f) *Using the lower schools to establish a new social order*.
> (g) The "*curriculum-revision*" *movement and its vagaries*.

## In Conclusion

How might a practical language arts curriculum be harmonized with essentialism, as a separate philosophy of education? How much emphasis should be placed on utilitarian goals as compared to the basics in the language arts? Educators need to discuss, analyze, and ultimately synthesize a language arts curriculum emphasizing essentialism within a practical framework of emphasizing living in the societal arena.

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[2] William C. Bagley, "An Essentialist Platform for the Advancement of American Education," *Educational Administration and Supervision* (April, 1938), pages 241-256.

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# ISSUES IN TEACHING THE LANGUAGE ARTS

There are numerous relevent issues which language arts teachers need to consider and analyze. Each teacher may then implement desired content from the resulting study.

## Computer Use And The Language Arts

Computer assisted instruction has much to offer students in a relevant language arts curriculum. Quality software for the computer needs to be selected on the basis of

(a) providing sequential learnings.

(b) containing vital content.

(c) ensuring optimal success in learning.

(d) being relatively easy for students to utilize.

(e) giving students quality feedback.

Generally computers operate in the following approximate ways:

(a) the involved student types in on the keyboard his/her name or identification number correctly.

(b) one or a few sentences are in evidence on the screen. The learner reads the ensuing sentences.

(c) a response is made to a question raised (on the screen) directly related to the sentences read.

A multiple choice item may be presented on the screen; the student types onto the keyboard which of the four distractors is correct--a, b, c, or d.

(d) a correct response given by the larner might be followed by a happy face shown on the screen. An incorrect answer given may be followed by "try again" on the screen. After a second incorrect response, a correct answer is then shown on the screen.

(e) a tabulation of per cent of correct responses for each student usually is also portrayed on the screen pertaining to a given lesson or unit.

Involving the use of computers in teaching, Gibson[1] wrote:

> Computers are a relatively recent addition to the educational scene. Yet they have been used and tested at all educational levels, from kindergarten through graduate school.
>
> The computer has a remarkable capacity for collecting, processing, storing, and retrieving large amounts of information. This is its key asset in an educational program. Individualized instruction methods have particular need for computer assistance. The computer can provide background data for each student and can store test results. It can provide a complete listing of the materials used by each student during each class. The computer evaluates and scores student responses with remarkable speed. It develops special plans of study geared to the individual learner.

Computerized instruction does not emphasize

1. teacher-pupil planning of objectives and learning activities.

2. student self evaluation in terms of personally developed criteria.

3. learners being involved in sequencing their own unique styles of learning.

4. a variety of learning activities in teaching and learning.

5. students making decisions as to identifying and solving perceived relevant problems.

### Utilitarian Purposes in the Language Arts

Teachers and students emphasizing learning that which is useful in society would

(a) identify vital problems which need solving.

(b) gather needed information from reliable reference sources.

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[1] Janet T. Gibson, Psychology for the Classroom. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1976, pages 321 and 322.

(c) develop related hypotheses in answer to the chosen problematic situation(s).

(d) test the hypothesis in functional activities and experiences.

(e) revise the tested hypothesis, if necessary.

Thus in the language arts, an actual business letter may need to be written by learners, individually or in committees, to order needed materials for a lesson or unit. To achieve the identified utilitarian purpose, the student with teacher guidance needs to:

(a) study proper models in writing a business letter.

(b) utilize a recommended model in actually composing a letter.

(c) proofread the written content. Make revisions where necessary.

(d) address and mail the business correspondence.

(e) evaluate the response to the mailed letter. Modified approaches may need to be used in ensuing situations in writing quality business letters.

Kennedy[2] listed the following possible writing activities for students:

1. Situations requiring letters:
    a. Social notes of thanks, sympathy, invitation, etc.
    b. Business letters, orders for materials, preparations for a trip, or requests for information
    c. Friendly letters to pen pals or foreign friends
    d. Gift tags and greeting cards
2. Situations needing a record:
    a. Plans made
    b. Class activities, events, sports, excursions, or science discoveries
    c. Minutes for clubs
    d. Room histories, diaries, or logs
3. Situations requiring filling out forms:
    a. Registrations slips, examination blanks, or applications
    b. Telegrams, cablegrams, messages
4. Situations requiring:
    a. Reports by individuals
    b. Panel discussions
    c. Directions and recipes
    d. Lists of materials needed for class plays or similar activities
    e. Copying of information or directions

5. Situations needing publicity:
    a. Advertisements, notices, or announcements
    b. Articles for room newspapers
    c. Headlines for newspaper articles
    d. Legends for bulletin boards and exhibits
    e. Room duties to be posted
6. Situations stimulating:
    a. Word pictures of poeple and places
    b. Editorials, news stories
    c. Science reports
    d. Mathematics games, puzzles, and reports[3]

Utilitarian purposes in the language arts do not

1. advocate teacher determined objectives and learning activities for students.

2. emphasize the use of programmed learning unless the acquired content is used directly in society.

3. stress teachers solely appraising student progress.

4. propose a structured curriculum common to all students.

## Textbooks and Workbooks

Numerous teachers make rather heavy use of textbooks and workbooks in teaching the language arts. These materials need to be carefully selected in terms of quality criteria. Presentations made by the teacher based on the use of textbooks and workbooks should be:

(a) challenging to aid each student to attain optimally.

(b) purposeful in that learners perceive value in studying and learning.

(c) functional in that knowledge acquired can be utilized in new situations.

(d) meaningful so that students understand vital facts, concepts, and generalizations.

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[2] Larry D. Kennedy, *Teaching the Elementary Language Arts*. New York: Harper and Row, 1975, page 175.

(e) interesting in order to motivate learner achievement.

Pertaining to the use of textbooks in teaching, Wilson and Hall[3] wrote:

> After assessing text materials, the teacher will realize that, regardless of what he does to adapt it, certain material is not appropriate for particular children. In such situations, a teacher has several alternatives. First, he may ask other pupils to read to those students for whom a book is too difficult. Second, he may decide that instruction should take a form other than reading, in which case he will tend to rely more heavily on pictures, film strips, and discussions than on independent reading. Third, he may locate alternative materials which cover the same content more simply, making it possible for children to learn the content without being frustrated by reading difficulty.

Opposite of the rather heavy use of textbooks and workbooks in teaching are the following:

1. a variety of activities and experiences being available to learners.
2. learners assist in identifying relevant objectives and quality learning activities.
3. students are involved in determining their own preferred styles of learning.
4. sequence resides within the student not within the confines of published, printed materials.
5. learners should be involved in appraising their own achievement.

## In Conclusion

There are advantages and disadvantages in using computerized instruction, utilitarian, and textbook/workbook methods of instruction. The major strength of each plan is as follows:

1. CAI emphasizes students being highly successful in each sequential step in learning.
2. Utilitarian means emphasize that which is useful to students in

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Robert M. Wilson and Maryanne Hall, Reading and the Elementary School Child. New York: D. VanNostrand Company, 1972, page 203.

school and in society.

3. Textbook/workbook methods advocate the ideas of specialists in the language arts determining what students are to learn.

Regardless of which approaches are utilized in lessons and units, each student should be guided to attain optimally.

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# THEORIES OF LEARNING AND THE LANGUAGE ARTS

It is important for teachers of language arts to develop recommended guiding principles when selecting objectives, learning activities, and evaluation procedures in the language arts curriculum. All teachers possess something that guides them in teaching-learning situations if this can be verbalized or not. Thus, a teacher may believe strongly that textbook writers in the language arts have relevant learnings that all pupils need to develop sequentially. A different teacher believes that much rote learning and memorization are methods to use in acquiring complex knowledge, skills, and attitudes in ongoing lessons and units. This same teacher then has a selected theory of learning which is a guide in implementing the curriculum. It may well be that a teacher of this description cannot describe orally or in writing which theory of learning is adhered to. The theory of mental discipline, emphasized in the United States prior to the 1900's, may then be in evidence. Basic principles back of the theory of mental discipline would be the following:

1. Difficult content must be learned by pupils to exercise the muscles in the mind.
2. Memorization of content is important to exercise the muscles in the mind.
3. A formal classroom setting is needed so that pupils may learn much content.
4. Content objectives become important to the exclusion of skills and attitudinal objectives.

## Stimulus-Response Theory of Learning

Stimulus-response school of thought in terms of how pupils learn is very important for all educators to be knowledgeable about. This theory emphasizes the following criteria:

1. Programmers may determine what pupils are to learn, using microcomputers or textbooks.

2. Pupils progress forward very slowly at each sequential step of learning.

3. Learners know immediately if their response to an item is correct or incorrect.

4. Reinforcement is inherent in programmed learning. Thus, pupils basically are correct in each sequential step in learning.

The use of behaviorally stated objectives also stressess stimulus-response psychology in teaching-learning situations. Behaviorally state objectives generally follow the following criteria:

1. Specificity is important in the writing of stated objectives.

2. It must be possible to measure pupil achievement after instruction, to determine if the desired ends have been achieved.

3. Learning activities are selected in terms of having pupils achieve the desired objectives.

4. The objectives are stated in terms of what pupils will be learning.

The following are examples of behaviorally stated objectives in the language arts:

1. Each pupil will spell correctly nine out of ten words.

2. The pupil will write a haiku poem.

3. The pupil will write a two hundred word paper on a topic of his own choosing.

4. Pupils will write a sentence following each of these sentence patterns:

   (a) noun-verb or subject-predicate
   (b) noun-verb-noun or subject-predicate-direct object
   (c) noun-verb-noun-noun or subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object
   (d) noun-linking verb-predicate adjective or subject-predicate-predicate adjective
   (e) noun-linking verb-predicate noun or subject-predicate-predicate nominative

5. The pupil will write a paragraph of forty words using a topic sentence.

6. Given a paragraph of fifty words, the pupil will find five errors in spelling.

In each of these objectives, the teacher can determine if pupils have or have not achieved the desired end or ends.

Behaviorally stated objectives written by the teacher for teaching-learning situations differ from programmed learning in the following ways:

1. Behaviorally stated objectives may be achieved by pupils in more than one class session. Pupils need to follow learnings sequentially as determined by the programmer in programmed learning.

2. Sequential steps in learning using behaviorally stated objectives are not as specific as compared to programmed learning. In programmed learning, the pupil moves forward very gradually from one sequential step to the next.

3. The teacher will need to do much of the evaluating when assessing pupil achievement in terms of behaviorally stated objectives, whereas in programmed learning, the pupil generally knows immediately if he is right or wrong after making a response by noting the answer given by the programmer.

4. The classroom teacher writes behaviorally stated objectives for teaching-learning situations, whereas the programmer determines what pupils are to learn in programmed learning.

The following would be an example of programmed learning in the language arts:

Which word has a different beginning letter as compared to the other two words?
bat cake cat — bat

Which two words of the following have the same beginning letter?
apple bat ban — bat, ban

Which words in the following set have the same beginning letter?
bat ban cat banana dad — bat, ban, banana

Which of the following words have two beginning letters which are alike?
bin cat bit saw bin bit

Sequential steps for pupils to achieve are smaller in programmed learning as compared to the use of behaviorally stated objectives written by the teacher. In programmed learning as well as in using behaviorally stated objectives, the following criteria must be followed:

1. It definitely can be measured if pupils have been successful in achieving desired objectives.

2. Pupils are to be successful in each sequential step of learning.

3. The child does not sequence his or her own learning; the teacher or programmer determines the correct order of experiences in learning for pupils.

Criticisms given of stimulus-reponse school of thought in terms of how pupils learn include the following:

1. It is mechanistic and emphasizes lower levels of cognition on the part of learners.
2. Attitudinal objectives may be slighted in teaching-learning situations.
3. Sequence and content in learning should be determined more by children as compared to programmers and/or teachers.
4. Selected pupils may find that this approach in teaching does not harmonize with their own individual learning styles.
5. A single method used extensively in teaching may not aid in developing and maintaining pupil interest in learning.

## Gestalt Theory of Learning

Gestaltist emphasize the importance of wholistic learning. Thus, individuals have a tendency to preceive content in terms of the wholeness of the situation. After preceiving the wholeness of an object, scene, or situation, specific facets or parts of the whole are then noticed. In reading and spelling, a pupil will view a complete word and then notice the parts that make up this word. In the teaching of reading, the teacher may utilize the following teaching procedures in the gestalt approach:

1. The teacher would guide learners in getting an overview of an entire story before discussing relevant parts. Thus, in developing background information within learners prior to reading, related ideas would be stressed emphasizing content covering the wholeness of the situation.

2. In introducing new words which pupils would encounter in reading, learners see these words in sentences on the chalkboard prior to engaging in the act of reading. The words may then be analyzed phonetically to aid learners in gaining important learnings pertaining to word recognition and identification.

3. Pupils attach necessary meanings pertaining to the new words within context. Thus, meanings to words are not learned in isolation but within a wholistic situation such as in a sentence.

4. From these experiences above (numbers 1, 2, and 3), pupils are encouraged to ask questions for which related content can be obtained through reading.

Following the reading of content on an individual basis, content may be discussed answering previously identified questions or purposes. Further learning experiences emphasizing wholistic approaches in teaching and learning emphasize the following:

1. pupils in a committee developing a mural pertaining to ideas gained from reading.

2. selected learners cooperatively dramatizing content taken from the completed reading activity.

3. individual pupils summarizing major generalizations achieved.

The gestalt school of thought in terms of stressing how pupils learn emphasizeds wholistic learnings initially. These initial wholistic learnings then may be followed by analyzing facets or parts of the whole.

## Structure of the Disciplines

Selected ldeading educators in the United States emphasize that pupils inductively develop key main ideas of a discipline. Thus, for example, college and university professors cooperatively would identify structural ideas pertaining to the academic discipline in which they specialize. Linguists then may identify structural ideas such as the following which pupils would achieve inductively:

1. diverse sentence patterns such as the subject-predicate pattern; the subject-predicate-direct object pattern; the subject-linking verb-predicate adjective pattern; the subject-linking verb-predicate noun pattern; and the subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object pattern.

2. ways of expanding sentences through the use of modifiers, appositives, subordinate clauses, and compounding parts within a sentence.

3. word patterns such as those which represent consistency between symbol and sound, e.g. cat, hat mat, fat, and bat, as well as understand word families where consistency is not in evidence between symbol and sound, e.g. box and fox, or weight and neigh.

4. differences in meaning of grammmar as compared to usage in developing major concepts pertaining to the study of the English language.

5. the English language changing in terms of new vocabulary terms being added as well as meanings changing of selected words. Other changes are also identifiable such as spelling of words and word order in sentences.

## In Summary

It is important for teachers, principals, and supervisors to study and develop a theory or theories of learning pertaining to the teaching of language arts. In making decisions pertaining to the selection of objectives, learning experiences, and assessment procedures, faculty members in schools must be guided by relevant and agreed upon principles and theories of learning.

## INDIVIDUALIZING THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

Each individual pupil must experience interest, purpose, and meaning in the language arts curriculum. Thus, the pupil needs to have ample opportunities to engage in decision making practices not only in deciding upon what to learn but also in selecting the desired learning experiences. The use of learning centers has strongly emphasized that pupils be involved in selecting objectives, learning opportunities, and assessment procedures in the school setting.

### Learning Centers in the Class Setting

Teacher-pupil planning should be utilized to plan and develop diverse learning centers pertaining to the language arts in the class setting.

1. A Writing Center. Here, pupils could view and discuss the contents of a set of interesting, meaningful pictures. These pictures may relate to an ongoing science, social studies, mathematics, or reading unit. A pupil individually or learners in a committee may select a picture to write about. The contents of the written product may pertain to

(a) a creative description of the actions in the picture.

(b) what might have happened prior to or after actions presently revealed in the picture.

(c) a poem (couplet, triplet, quatrain, or limerick) relating to the picture.

Thus, pupils have an opportunity to select a picture and write related content of their own choosing. Objects, models, and replicas may also serve as stimuli to encourage pupils to participate in writing activities.

2. A Listening Center. Commercially prepared as well as teacher developed tapes may provide excellent content for pupils to listen to. These tapes may relate to an ongoing unit of study such as in the area of reading. Pupils may reveal comprehension and at the same time increase interest in listening by

(a) periodically answering selected questions pertaining to the listening activity.

(b) writing a mystery story, an adventure story, or a biography or autobiography of the related content.

(c) developing a related tall tale.

(d) cooperatively developing a related mural or frieze.

(e) dramatizing selected incidences and events.

3. A Reading Center. A variety of interesting, appealing library books on diverse topics and different levels of achievement need to be available for pupils. Filmstrips relating to favorite stories of children should also be available at this center. Experience charts developed by pupils may also be an inherent part of this reading center. Thus, each learner may select reading materials that harmonize with his/her interests and achievement levels.

The child may wish to share content read by

(a) developing individual pictures pertaining to selected events.

(b) discussing main ideas with the teacher.

(c) telling stories read to other children in a committee setting.

(d) planning and completing a movie set on ideas gained from reading.

4. A Speaking Center. Pupils must have ample background experiences to be able to participate in oral communication of ideas. Thus, a reference center needs to be separate or an inherent part of this learning station. Pupils then may gain needed information from selected slides, films, filmstrips, pictures, models, replicas, maps, globes, transparencies, and reading materials. Content obtained from these reference sources may be utilized in the following speaking activities:

(a) presenting an oral report to others on a specific topic or area of interest.

(b) being a member of a panel to present content to listeners.

(c) participating in a buzz session to obtain information related to solving a problem.

(d) taking part in a discussion, with teacher direction, to obtain consensus in attempting to solve a problem.

(e) participating in creative dramatics activities in which speaking parts are developed as needed.

(f) hypothesizing about an object or picture of an object as to its use.

5. Other Learning Centers. Various other learning centers may be developed involving teacher-pupil planning and development. As the need arises, these centers may include

(a) a spelling center.

(b) a handwriting center.

(c) a choral reading center.

## In Summary

The teacher of language arts must implement as an overall objective that each pupil achieve to his/her optimal potential in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Interesting, meaningful, and purposeful learning experiences in the language arts should guide pupils in achieving this objective.

# EVALUATING ACHIEVEMENT IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS

The teacher of language arts must be proficient in evaluating pupil achievement. Thus, it can be noticed which learners are or are not achieving desired objectives. If pupils are not achieving stated objectives, additional learning experiences need to be provided to aid learners in attaining desired ends.

The teacher, through evaluation, can also diagnose pupil difficulties in learning and work in the direction of remedying these deficiencies. How can pupil achievement be appraised appropriately in the language arts curriculum?

## Techniques of Appraisal

There are diverse techniques which may be utilized to notice gains made by pupils in learning. A major approach which may be used pertains to teacher observation. The teacher may observe pupil achievement in different facets of language arts growth.

1. Appraising pupil growth in identifying and using different sentence patterns through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Thus, the learner may develop needed understandings, skills, and attitudes pertaining to sentences following

(a) the subject-predicate pattern.
(b) the subject-linking verb-predicate adjective pattern.
(c) the subject-linking verb-predicate noun pattern.
(d) the subject-predicate-direct object pattern.
(e) the subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object pattern.

Teacher observation may be used during and after a variety of learning activities have been provided for pupils to notice if learners are attaching meaning to these diverse sentence patterns.

2. Evaluating pupil progress in being able to expand sentences. A variety of interesting, meaningful, and purposeful learning experiences must be provided for learners so they may speak and write more effectively by incorporating needed subordinate clauses, independent clauses or other compound parts, modifiers, and appositives within selected sentences. Thus, for example, a pupil may join two sentences together so that a complex sentence is in evidence (one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses) or a compound sentence results (two or more independent clauses in a sentence). Or, a learner may add modifiers, such as adverbs and adjectives to clarify content. Pupils may also inject appositives within a sentence to present content in a more meaningful manner.

By observing pupils' written products or listening to the learner's spoken voice, the teacher can determine if objectives are being achieved pertaining to expanding sentences.

3. Assessing learner achievement in appreciating the history and development of the English language. Learners would then develop needed understandings, skills, and attitudes pertaining to

(a) changes in spelling of important words in the English language covering selected periods of time.

(b) modification of sentence structure, word usage, and word meanings when comparing earlier periods of time in American history with the present.

4. Appraising pupils' achievement in the use of juncture, pitch, and stress. Thus, for example, pupils would ultimately reveal, as a result of carefully selected sequential learning experiences, if content is presented effectively orally in which pauses (juncture) are of adequate duration between words and sentences as well as within a word. Learners would also

reveal their understanding of how a specific sentence can change in meaning if words are pitched higher or lower in context. Pupils then, for example, would notice how in a short sentence such as the following, the ending words would be pitched differently depending on the kind of sentence involved:

(a) John ran. (declarative sentence)

(b) John ran? (interrogative sentence)

Also, pupils may reveal learnings obtained pertaining to the concept "stress" by explaining how a sentence changes in meaning if modifications are made as to which word or words are stressed more than others in context. A learner, for example, may say the following: "I received an A in social studies." If heavy stress is placed on the word "I," emphasis is placed on "I," not someone else receiving the A grade in social studies. Or, if the pupil in the preceding sentence stresses "A" more than any of the other words in the sentence, emphasis then is being placed on receiving an "A" grade as compared to B, C, D, or F grades.

5. Evaluating learner progress in vocabulary growth. Learning activities need to be provided pupils whereby relevant objectives are achieved in developing the listening, speaking, reading, and writing vocabularies. After an adequate number of interesting, meaningful, and purposeful learning opportunities have been provided for pupils, teacher observation can be utilized to determine growth in all four vocabularies of learners such as

(a) comprehending content more effectively through listening.

(b) presenting ideas orally in a more proficient manner to others.

(c) understanding, better than previously, content gained from reading.

(d) writing more clearly, accurately, and creatively as compared to previous attempts.

6. Appraising learner achievement in listening. Pupils need to develop skills pertaining to a variety of purposes involving listening. The teacher may observe which pupils learn to listen to content

(a) to think critically and creatively.

(b) to gain factual information, main ideas, and generalizations.

(c) to arrange ideas sequentially or in a selected order.

(d) to obtain directions.

The teacher must provide learning experiences for pupils in which they develop needed listening skills relating to comprehending ideas from the spoken voice. Pupils should experience success in gaining relevant information as a result of learning activities involving listening in the language arts curriculum.

7. Evaluating pupil growth in reading achievement. Learners need to experience continuous progress in reading. Thus, each pupil will develop to his/her optimum in reading. Individually, learners must develop skill in utilizing phonetic analysis, syllabication, picture clues, context clues, structural analysis, and configuration clues in attempting to identify new words. Also, pupils need to comprehend content for a variety of purposes such as

(a) to obtain facts and skim for information.

(b) to realize main ideas and generalizations.

(c) to think creatively and critically as well as to solve problems.

(d) to appreciate ideas gained from reading.

(e) to gain proper order or sequence of ideas.

(f) to understand directions.

The teacher must guide each pupil to experience continuous success in reading. Diagnosis of pupil difficulties by the teacher must be inherent in a good program of reading instruction. Deficiencies in reading must be remedied through a variety of interesting, meaningful, and purposeful learning experiences.

8. Assessing achievement in speaking. Pupils need to become increasingly proficient in different purposes involving oral communication of content. Thus, pupils should develop needed skills in conversing with others, discussing ideas, reading orally with expression and intonation, interviewing selected individuals, storytelling, reporting content to others, impromptu speaking, and other forms of oral communication. Pupil-teacher planning may be utilized to develop criteria to appraise pupil progress in communicating content orally to others.

9. Evaluating progress in writing. Each pupil must be guided to develop optimal growth in learning experiences involving writing. Learners then need to progress continuously in writing business and friendly letters, poems (haiku, couplets, triplets, limericks, free verse, and others), creative stories (tall tales, legends, myths, adventure, mystery, and suspense), as well as engage in writing in a more serious vein (reports, biographies, autobiographies, announcements, notes extending sympathy or congratulations), and engage in taking notes and developing outlines.

The mechanics of writing such as improved handwriting, spelling, usage, capitalization, and punctuation are important to stress in teaching-learning situations. However, content or ideas developed in written work should receive considerably more emphasis in ongoing learning activities as compared to the mechanics of writing.

## In Summary

Objectives in the language arts for pupils to achieve need to be selected carefully. Each objective chosen must be relevant for learners to achieve in terms of developing the listening, speaking, reading, and writing vocabularies of pupils. Learning opportunities for pupils to achieve desired objectives must be selected in terms of being interesting, meaningful, and purposeful. Pupil achievement may then be evaluated in terms of having attained stated objectives in the language arts curriculum.

# READING: THE BASICS VERSUS PROBLEM SOLVING

BY

MARLOW EDIGER

Much is being written and spoken about the basics in the curriculum. Generally, reading, writing, and arithmetic are perceived by lay people, as well as numerous educators, to comprise the basics. Examining, the first of the three r's, a vital question that needs answering pertains to which basic learnings pupils should acquire in the reading curriculum.

Reading may also be perceived as a curriculum area which provides needed content within the framework of solving real life-like problems for learners. Content is then read to provide vital information to solve problematic situations.

The balance of this paper pertains to a discussion of reading as a basic in the curriculum versus the use of reading as data gathering directly related to identified problems.

## Reading as a Basic in the Curriculum

The concept basic or basics refers to essential learnings for all learners to acquire. Thus, common learnings in reading need to be acquired by each and every pupil. These basic learnings are necessary to guide each pupil to become a contributing successful adult. The reading curriculum then needs to emphasize essential learnings to develop proficient readers now, as well as in the future adult world. Which skills need

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emphasizing as objectives in the reading curriculum?

Those who believe in basic learnings in reading, no doubt, emphasize a systematic program of phonics instruction for pupils. The teaching of phonics has remained rather significant in time in the reading program. Thus, pupils need to develop skills to associate sounds with selected symbols to identify new words. Phonetic analysis is perceived to be a vital key in the unlocking of new words. Dividing a word into syllables may also be considered as an essential learning for pupils. Thus, a new word may be recognized after it has been divided into syllables. Using phonetic analysis and syllabication skills may have disciplinary values for pupils. These skills can be measured rather effectively, if acquired by pupils. Other word recognition techniques may also be emphasized in teaching-learning situations, such as the use of context clues, picture clues, configuration clues, and structural analysis.

Comprehension of content is vital in any program of reading instruction. A basics reading curriculum may emphasize reading content to acquire factual information. The teacher can measure, if after instruction, pupils have gained vital facts. Reading to follow directions provides precise and specific content which is measurable as well as useful. Additional purposes in reading comprehension include critical reading, creative reading, skimming, and recreational reading. These purposes may also be added to the basics in the reading curriculum.

A systematic curriculum can well be emphasized in a basics reading curriculum. Thus, the teacher may sequentially choose measurably stated objectives for pupils to attain in reading. The teacher also needs to select specific learning activities to guide learners in achieving each objective. Ultimately, the teacher can measure if pupils individually have achieved each stated desired ends.

A systematic reading curriculum is preplanned for pupils. Thus, objectives, experiences, and evaluation techniques are selected prior to instruction. Generally, little or no pupil-teacher planning is involved in developing a systematic curriculum.

## Problem Solving in the Reading Curriculum

If pupils truly identify and attempt to solve problem areas, a preplanned reading curriculum developed prior to instruction is not possible. The teacher needs to develop a stimulating learning environment in order that problem solving activities might be in evidence. If pupils, for example, are studying a unit on the Middle East area of the world, learners may identify problems/ questions such as the following:

1. Why is the Wailing Wall important to Israel?

2. Why is the Dome of the Rock significant to Moslem Arabs?

3. How relevant is the Mosque of Abraham to both Arabs and Jews?

4. How significant is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to selected groups in the Christian religion?

To locate related content pertaining to these identified problem areas, among other experiences, pupils may read vital information. Reading activities are emphasized to assist pupils to hypothesize or to obtain answers to questions. The reading curriculum is not predetermined for pupils prior to instruction. Rather, the skills of reading are emphasized as the need arises to obtain content directly related to pupil purposes. Diverse purposes in reading may then be emphasized as content is needed to solve problems and answer questions.

Word recognition skills may be emphasized as the need arises. These techniques may include using phonetic analysis, syllabication, context clues, picture clues, structural analysis, and configuration clues.

Word recognition techniques and diverse kinds of comprehension skills emphasized must:

1. be on the present achievement levels of individual pupils.

2. stimulate pupils to attain optimal levels of achievement.

3. be meaningful and purposeful to learners individually.

4. emphasize the interests and needs of pupils.

### Other Programs of Reading Instruction

There are numerous additional plans of teaching reading emphasizing other philosophies of teaching and learning.

1. Individual reading. The learner with teacher guidance is in the best position to select which library books to read sequentially. The involved pupil may also choose appraisal techniques to evaluate comprehension, attitudes, and purposes. Pupil-teacher conferences may be positively used to assess learner progress in reading.

2. Linguistic procedures. One linguistic school of thought in initial reading instruction emphasizes that pupils master word patterns. In beginning reading instruction, consistency between symbol and sound should be in evidence. Thus pupils with teacher guidance may initially learn to read sentences containing the following word patterns: bat, cat, hat, fat, mat, Nat, pat, rat, and sat. A new word comes into being by changing an initial consonant, e.g. bat and cat. Later, in sequence pupils with teacher guidance may recognize words which contain irregular spellings. Thus, the following may

come rather late in the instructional sequence: cough, through, rough, and bough. At this stage of reading achievement, a mixture of regularly and irregularly spelled words comprise sentences, paragraphs, and stories read by pupils. However, it still would be relevant for pupils to master words using the patterns approach. Sentences in reading may also follow specific patterns, e.g. the subject, predicate pattern; the subject, predicate, indirect object, direct object pattern; the subject, predicate, direct object pattern; the subject, linking verb, predicate adjective pattern; and the subject, linking verb, predicate noun patterns.

3. Basal readers. Basal readers may well be incorporated into a basics method of reading instruction. Lay people, as well as selected educators, might emphasize that essential word recognition and reading comprehension skills are inherent in the sequential proper utilization of basal readers. The use of basal readers and their related manuals indicates that teachers, principals, and supervisors believe that reading specialists possess the best known in helping pupils achieve optimally in reading.

## In Summary

There are basic assumptions inherent in each recommended plan in the teaching of reading. Teachers, principals, and supervisors need to analyze each program of instruction, and ultimately choose that which guides each pupil to attain optimal progress in reading.

## GOALS IN THE READING CURRICULUM

Which goals should learners achieve in reading? Reading is the first of the three r's (reading, writing, and arithmetic). Society expects learners in schools to be able to function well in the reading area after graduation from formal schooling. To develop pupil proficiency in reading, which ends might be stressed by teachers in teaching-learning situations?

## READING GOALS FOR LEARNERS ATTAINMENT

Reading specialists advocate general goals which need attainment in order to develop productive readers.

First of all, learners need to master word recognition techniques to identify new words. Using phonetic analysis skills guides pupils in unlocking unknown words. If a pupil does not recognize a word, associating sounds with abstract symbols definitely helps to identify a word. Many times, if a pupil can identify an initial sound of a word, that might be adequate since other clues may also be utilized to unlock an unknown word.

A second word recognition technique includes the utilization of syllabication. Thus, if a learner cannot identify a word, he/she may divide it into syllables and thus be able to correctly pronounce the word.

A third word recognition technique includes the use of structural analysis. A child can not identify a word. By dividing the unknown word into a prefix, root word, and suffix, proper identification of that word may be in evidence.

A fourth means of word identification involves using context clues. By using context clues, the pupil identifies the unknown word in terms of it making sense in relationship to other words within a sentence.

Fifthly, a beginning reader may use picture clues to identify an unknown word. For example, a pupil is unable to unlock a word in reading, by looking at the picture, located on the same page as are the abstract words being read, the unfamiliar becomes familiar. Thus, the picture tells what the unknown word is.

The whole word method, as an identification technique, has much to recommend itself. Each word differs from other words, in most cases, by being longer or shorter in length. Or, selected letters withing a word may be taller or shorter.

The teacher of reading needs to guide learners at any stage of development to become proficient in identifying new words. Each and every teacher must be a teacher or reading.

Heilman, Blair, and Rupley[1] wrote:

> Children need to have a variety of word recognition skills to get at the meaning of what they read.
>
> Phonics, structural analysis, and contextual analysis are the three word identification skills that children should be taught so that they can comprehend written language.
>
> Opportunities must be provided for the children to apply their word identification skills in meaningful context.
>
> The major purpose of teaching word identification skills is to provide children with tools for getting meaning from what they read.
>
> Children need to develop flexibility in identifying words so that they can use all available cue systems to get at meaning.

In addition to developing skill in word recognition techniques, learners need to achieve relevant comprehension skills. One type of comprehension skill involves learners reading to achieve vital facts. Factual knowledge is precise, exact, and objective. Higher levels of thinking might accrue if significant understood facts provide the necessary raw materials.

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[1] Arthur W. Heilman, et. al., Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading. Fifth edition. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1981, page 183.

A second type of comprehension skill is that pupils learn to read directions carefully. An end product may turn out well if directions are read and followed accurately.

Thirdly, learners need to achieve appropriate sequence in reading subject matter. With proper sequential learning in reading, pupils may realize that events happen in a specific order. To attach meaning to what is being learned, pupils need to have proper order of occurances or events in a story or series of happenings.

Fourthly, it is important for pupils to read to develop generalizations. A generalization is supported by facts. Generalizations are broad understandings and may come about from reading a page, a chapter, or an entire book.

Critical reading skills emphasize higher levels of cognition in comprehension. A pupil is able to separate facts from opinions, fantasy from reality, as well as accurate from inaccurate statements in the critical reading arena.

Creative reading, a sixth type of comprehension skill, involves revealing unique, novel, and original ideas. Thus, a pupil reading creatively is able to place the personal self in the "shoes" of an individual or several individuals in the story being read. Or, the reader is able to predict what might happen next in the reading selection.

A reader might also comprehend content in reading to solve a problem. Subject matter being read is not an end, in and of itself, but a means to an end. That end being to arrive at a solution in the solving of problems.

A proficient reader then does not merely identify words but also comprehends what has been read. Capabilities developed in utilizing diverse word recognition techniques should guide pupils to achieve comprehension (understanding and meaning) of subject matter in the reading curriculum.

Tinker and McCullough[2] wrote:

> Although comprehension and interpretation are not exactly synonymous, they are closely related and interdependent. By interpretation we mean the thinking side of comprehension, or, we might put it, thoughtful interpretation. In many situations satisfactory comprehension depends primarily upon how much interpretation is involved. Examples:
>
> 1. To arrive at conclusions or to draw inferences from what is read are marks of interpretation.
> 2. To obtain the intended meaning from graphs, maps, statistical tables, and certain pictures denotes interpretation.
> 3. To relate and co-ordinate information derived from different sources demands interpretation. The same is true for relating textual material to pictures.
> 4. To recognize the main idea of a passage and to marshal relevant supporting details is largely a matter of interpretation.
> 5. To recognize the problem and to efficiently seek its solution in reading for a specific purpose often involves considerable interpretation.

There are also relevant study skills which each pupil should develop. Being able to utilize an index can be invaluable for learners. A pupil may quickly find content desired in a reference book by using the index. There are subskills which must be achieved to use an index. These subskills include:

1. knowing how words are alphabetized.
2. finding an entry in the index which covers the pursued subject matter.
3. being able to read the related subject matter in the reference book.
4. taking notes and/or summarizing what has been read.

Developing proficiency in the use of a table of contents may also be invaluable to many learners. Thus, in using a reference book to secure needed information, the involved pupil may survey entries quickly in the table of contents. Using the table of contents may well be a great time saver in locating precise information.

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[2] Miles A. Tinker and Constance M. McCollough, Teaching Elementary Reading. Second edition. New York: Appleton - Century Crafts, 1962, page 167.

A learner may need to obtain subject matter involving a specific topic. By effectively using a card catalog, related reference books may be secured. A card catalog contains the following cards:

1. subject card. If a pupil, for example, wants to locate content on copper mining, he/she may look for the card in the catalog in the library on copper or copper mining. The learner may then notice the Dewey Decimal System or Library of Congress call number. The call number may be written down to secure the needed library book from the open stacks. If open stacks are not utilized in the library, the call number may be given to the librarian who in turn secures the needed library book.

2. title card. If a learner knows the exact title of a desired library book, he/she may look for the title card in the card catalog. The title card will provide the call number of the needed book.

3. author card. In using an author card, the pupil must know the exact name(s) of the author of the wanted book. Again, the call number will then appear on the author card.

Other usable reference materials in which pupils need to develop relevant sequential skills include

1. dictionaries
2. almanacs
3. atlases
4. slides, films, and filmstrips
5. records and cassettes
6. transparencies
7. illustrations
8. film loops
9. study prints

Jarolimek[3] lists the following reference materials for pupils in ongoing units of study:

Books
Textbooks
Supplementary reading books
Picture books
Biographies
Historical fiction

Special References
Encyclopedias
Maps and globes
Atlases
Dictionaries

Miscellaneous Materials
Advertisements
Magazines and periodicals
Recipes
City and telephone directories
Labels
Guidebooks and tour books
Letters and diaries
Travel folders
Postcards
Newspapers and news clippings
Comic books
Pictures

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John Jarolimek, Social Studies in Elementary Education. Sixth edition. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1982, page 251.

World Almanac
Charts and graphs
Yearbooks
Legislative Manuals
Who's Who in America
Junior Book of Authors
Statesman's Yearbook

Reference Aids
Card Catalog
The Reader's Guide
Bibliographies

Schedules and timetables
Pamphlets and booklets (such as those from the information services of foreign countries, Superintendent of Documents, conservation departments, historical societies, art galleries)
Weather reports
Manufacturers' guarantees and warranties
Money, checks, coupons for premiums, receipts
Reviews, government documents

## EVALUATION OF ACHIEVEMENT

A quality teacher is a proficient evaluator of learner progress. A variety of appraisal procedures need to be utilized. Among other evaluation techniques, the following may be utilized:

1. teacher observation
2. anecdotal records
3. sociometric devices
4. teacher written tests
5. checklists and rating scales
6. standardized achievement tests
7. personality tests
8. interect inventories
9. criterion referenced tests
10. self-evaluation by the learner

Robert Carlin[4] developed the following checklist to appraise pupil achievement:

WORD RECOGNITION
Sight Vocabulary
Use of Context Clues
Phonics
Structural Analysis
Use of Dictionary
COMPREHENSION
Vocabulary
Literal Meaning
Inferential Meaning
Critical Evaluation
STUDY SKILLS
Location of Information
Selection of Information
Organization of Information
Retention of Information
Use of Graphic Aids
Following Directions
Flexibility

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[4] Robert Carlin, Teaching Elementary Reading. Third Edition. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanavich, 1980, page 115.

## IN CONCLUSION

Each pupil needs to perceive interest, purpose, and meaning in the reading curriculum. Thus, each learner may be gudied to achieve optimally. Ediger[5] wrote:

> A vast amount of knowledge is available for consumption in society. It is important to select carefully what should be taught in terms of understandings. The teacher definitely does not want to clutter the mind of the child with many unrelated, irrelevant facts. Nor does the teacher want to emphasize only one facet of the child's development. Children need to develop well intellectually, as well as physically, socially, and emotionally. One facet of development is not adequate when teaching pupils. For example, if the teacher only emphasizes the importance of pupils developing well intellectually, then the child will suffer in other areas of growth. A child who does not achieve well socially, of course, can become an isolate. A school is a social situation with many people; an individual does not live unto himself only. Pupils who do well in intellectual development only, may find school life to be unenjoyable due to lacking in social development. A pupil who lacks in positive attitudes or emotional development may dislike various curriculum areas in the elementary school thus hindering his total development. Thus, it behooves the teacher to emphasize all facets of a child's development.

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[5] Marlow Ediger, Relevancy in the Elementary Curriculum. Kirksville, Missouri Simpson Publishing Company, 1975, page 23.

## PROBLEMS IN THE TEACHING OF READING

Learners in the school setting may experience difficulty in associating sounds with symbols in ongoing learning activities involving reading. The pupil who cannot relate specific sounds to particular abstract symbols in any language, no doubt, is at a disadvantage in developing optimal proficiency in reading.

There are diverse methods and programs of instruction available to aid pupils to associate sounds with symbols in the reading curriculum.

### The Initial Teaching Alphabet

The Initial Teaching Alphabet (hereafter called ITA) emphasizes a specific philosophy when guiding pupils to make proper associations between sounds (phonemes) and symbols (graphemes) in the reading and spelling of words.

1. There are selected symbols in traditional spelling of English words which are consistent in sound, such as the letters b, c, d, f, g as in goat, h, j as in jam, k, l, m, n, p, r as in run, s, t, v, w, y, and z as in zebra. These same symbols are used in content printed using ITA symbols.

2. There are too few vowel letters in the English alphabet. Thus, for example, the short a vowel sound as in "măn" is written the same way using traditional and ITA symbols. This would be true of the same symbols being utilized in traditional spelling and in ITA for the rest of the commonly used short vowel symbols: e as in bĕt; i as in bĭn, o as in cŏt; and u as in ŭnder. As examples of new symbols utilized in ITA to show consistent sound-symbol relationships, commonly used long vowel sounds are written in the following ways: æ as in bāke, ϵϵ as in rēap, ie as in sīght, œ as in rōpe and ue as in repūte.

Thus, ITA advocates recommend a one-to-one relationship between symbol and sound in the curriculum area of reading. Unique symbols are utilized, other than those used in traditional spelling of words, to guide pupils in perceiving that the same sound can be attached to a specific symbol consistently. There are forty-four symbols representing forty-four sounds in the Initial Teaching Alphabet.

## The Language Experience Approach

The language experience approach pertaining to reading instruction involves criteria such as the following:

1. Learners must first of all have meaningful experiences with the use of excursions, filmstrips, films, slides, study prints, pictures, and records. Following the use of one or more of the above named learning experiences, early primary grade pupils dictate related content to the teacher; the ideas presented are encoded using manuscript letters. Pupils with teacher guidance may then read the recorded ideas on these experience charts. With an increased number of completed experience charts, based on diverse learning activities, pupils can become increasingly proficient in reading.

As pupils progress through diverse levels of schooling, the experience chart concept can be utilized in teaching-learning situations. Thus, learners may complete their own experience charts based on experiences after having achieved an adequately developed writing vocabulary.

2. Pupils may pace their own progress in reading, as well as in writing, when developing and completing experience charts. Thus, the teacher does not determine sequence of learning of pupils in reading and writing using the language experience approach. The teacher may, of course, structure the title or topic to be considered in writing these experience charts, such as selecting

specific audio-visual materials centering around specific main ideas and generalizations.

## Programmed Reading

Programmed reading emphasizes tenets, such as the following, pertaining to the teaching of reading:

1. The programmer determines what pupils are to learn and the order or sequence of these learnings.

2. Pupils move forward very slowly in small steps, thus insuring continual success in learning.

3. Learners know immediately if they are right or wrong when responding to a specific item. They may check their own response to an item with the correct answer as given by the programmer.

4. Positive reinforcement is in evidence if pupils respond correctly to each sequential item of learning. If a pupil gives an incorrect response to an item, he/she can notice immediately which the correct answer is and move on to the next sequential item.

5. Pupils individually can work at their own optimal rate of speed in reading using programmed materials. Thus, provision may be made for slow, average, and fast achievers in reading.

6. Programmers utilize the part to whole method in having pupils learn in the reading curriculum. Thus, specific bits of information are learned sequentially; eventually, main ideas or generalizations are achieved.

## Diacritical Marking Systems of Reading Instruction

There are selected reading specialists who emphasize using a diacritical marking system in helping pupils progress in reading instruction. Edward Fry has developed a rather comprehensive diacritical marking system in the teaching of reading. Among major criteria stressed by Fry, the following are important:

1. the spelling of each word remains the same as it exists in traditional orthography or spelling of words.

2. silent letters within a word contain slash marks, e.g., k̸nife̸, k̸nee̸.

3. long vowel sounds contain a bar above the related letters, e.g., spēa̸k, rōw̸.

4. there are other diacritical markings within the framework of printed words, such as a dot located directly above a schwa sound, e.g., ȧgo.

5. gradually, pupils develop increased proficiency in reading without the use of these diacritical marks.

6. Fry's diacritical marking system in some ways is related to selected marking systems used in dictionaries, such as a bar being located directly over a long vowel sound.

7. short vowel sounds and consistent consonants contain no diacritical marks, e.g., run, hat, and pet.

## Individualized Reading

Many library books pertaining to diverse achievement levels and on a variety of topics are necessary for an effective individualized reading program. Individualized reading programs stress the importance of the following generalizations:

1. pupils select a library book to read of their very own choosing.

2. many difficulties are hurdled by learners in reading due to intrinsic inherent interest in content being read.

3. pupils do their own pacing in terms of optional speed in reading

content.

4. diverse methods may be utilized to appraise learner achievement in having read content from a specific library book. One method of appraisal may well include the teacher conducting a conference with a pupil after the latter has completed reading a library book.

5. each pupil basically sequences his/her own learnings in terms of the order of library books to be read. The teacher guides pupils in selecting library books to read if the latter is not able to choose and actually complete reading specific library books in sequence.

6. pupils who reveal specific common difficulties in reading, such as in word attack skills, may be placed in a particular group for reading instruction in the diagnosed area of difficulty.

Heavy emphasis upon phonetic analysis in identifying new words would definitely not be emphasized as being important by advocates of individualized reading.

## Phonemic Approach

There are selected linguists who define reading in terms of pupils making associations between sounds and related symbols. Thus, in beginning reading instruction, pupils with teacher guidance would learn to read words in a word family. For example, in the following words, there is a consistent relationship between each symbol and its related sound: ban, can, Dan, fan, Jan, man, Nan, pan, ran, tan, and van. In the preceding list of words, initial consonants are changed to develop new words, e.g., the letter "b" in the word "ban" is changed to the letter "c"; thus, a new word (can) is formed.

Later on, as pupils progress through the early years of schooling, more emphasis in sequence is placed upon pupils mastering the identification of irregularly spelled words. Thus, content written for pupils at this stage of achievement may well be much more representative of the terms, concepts, and sentences used by learners when communicating content orally. There, of course, are problems inherent in writing meaningful sentences for pupils to read when utilizing a strict sound-symbol relationship in beginning reading instruction, such as content pertaining to a specific set of words, such as ban, can, Dan, fan, Jan, man, Nan, pan, ran, tan, and van. Yet, there are few other patterns of words as consistent and as numerous as the "ban" pattern of words.

Generalizations inherent in the phonemic approach or method of reading instruction would include the following:

1. advocates stress the importance of pupils noticing patterns of words and consistency between symbol and related sound.

2. pupils develop confidence in identifying new words through the patterns approach. Thus, for example, the word "cat" patterns with the following: fat, hat, mat, Nat, pat, rat, sat, and vat.

3. reading may well consist of mastering sounds with symbols in ongoing experiences.

## In Summary

Numerous approaches or methods are available to guide pupils in developing optimal achievement in reading. Each approach has a unique philosophy pertaining to the teaching of reading.

1. The Initial Teaching Alphabet emphasizes using forty-four symbols representing forty-four diverse sounds for pupils to master. There are selected new symbols in ITA which, of course, do not exist in traditional spelling of

words.

2. The language experience method stresses the importance of using pupils' personal experiences in developing materials in the reading curriculum.

3. Programmed reading puts much emphasis upon pupils learning content sequentially in which success basically is inherent for each small step of progress made. Learners individually may achieve at their own unique optimal rate of speed.

4. Edward Fry's diacritical marking system emphasizes the use of traditional letters in reading and spelling of words. Diacritical markings are used with these symbols to aid pupils in reading achievement, e.g., slash marks appear on silent letters within each word.

5. Individualized reading stresses the importance of pupils choosing their own books in reading as well as learners sequencing content to be read. The interests of pupils are a primary consideration to use in establishing an individualized reading program.

6. Phonemic methods emphasize strongly that pupils learn to associate individual sounds with a specific symbol or specific symbols. The patterns approach in learning to read words is strongly emphasized.

7. There are many other approaches which may be utilized in reading instruction, such as color coding, e.g., a specific color appears over a particular long vowel sound; and rebus, e.g., a small picture taking the place of a complex printed word in context.

# READING, THE PUPIL, AND PARENTS

Parents need to have adequate knowledge of the reading curriculum to help their children to achieve as much as possible in this important area of development. Two extremes need to be avoided in helping pupils do well in reading. One extreme is to desire excessively high achievement from a pupil. The other is to expect too little in terms of pupil progress in reading. Thus, a realistic level of achievement in reading must be the lot of each learner.

## Developing Word Attack Skills

Adequate time in teaching must be given to aid each pupil to become proficient in recognizing unknown words. A skilled teacher of reading will assist pupils to develop the following methods to recognize new words:

1. use of context clues. The pupil is able to choose a word (to represent the unknown word) which makes sense within a sentence. Sometimes, a pupil may select a word which does not make sense in a sentence. There, of course, are many words which may well make sense in a given sentence. For example, in the sentence--"I see a ______," there are many words which make sense, such as the words horse, dog, cat, cow, mouse, and others. Some words, of course, do not make sense such as mice, geese, horses, dogs, where, and others. Thus, it becomes apparent that a child needs to utilize other means to recognize new words.

2. use of phonetic analysis. Here, the pupil relates a sound with a letter or several letters. In the word "run", for example, each letter makes its own unique sound. The word "chair" has two letters which make one sound, e.g. ch. Thus, if a pupil cannot identify a specific word, relating sounds to letters can aid in the identification process. One must realize that selected words and parts of words contain some or considerable irregularity in relating sounds to letters, e.g. one, phone, boy, the, and where. A good program of reading instruction then should emphasize the use of phonetic analysis to identify new words. However, there are, of course, limitations in using this approach as a word recognition technique.
3. use of syllabication. A pupil may feel a specific word is new and cannot be identified until component syllables are recognized. The following words can readily be divided into syllables: unlikely, singer, irregular, and transport. Thus, for example, a pupil may think that unlikely is a new word until it is divided into the following syllables: un like ly. The involved pupil may have read the un syllable in other words. He or she may also have read the word like previously, as well as the ly ending in other words. The word unlikely may then be recognized by related previously gained learnings.

4. use of sight words. When learning to read, pupils notice that some words are shorter in length as compared to others, e.g. an, boy, night, and bicycle. Some words contain taller letters than others--ball, noon, and horse. Some letters go below the line--yellow, baby, gone, and pan. With practice in reading, pupils then develop the ability to use the sense of sight to notice likenesses and differences in words. With meaningful practice in reading, learners may well develop a large sight vocabulary.

5. using picture clues. Good reading materials should contain relevant illustrations. Pupils learn much content from the study of these pictures. Also, when a pupil is not able to identify a specific word, he or she may obtain relevant clues by studying the related illustration on the page of content being read. Thus, for example, a pupil may be reading the sentence--"He washed the ______." The learner cannot identify the last word in the sentence. However, by looking at the picture on the same page, the pupil may actually see a dog being washed. The new word to be read then is "dog." Not always, of course, will a picture give clues as to what the unknown word is. In the above example pertaining to the unknown word "dog", a child may use phonetic analysis as a further

method in identifying a specific word. The "d" sound usually is consistent with that letter, e.g. day, done, do, does, and did.

A word of caution needs to be mentioned here pertaining to selected techniques which may be utilized to recognize new words. There are pupils who cannot benefit from instruction in phonetic analysis. In other words, they cannot associate a sound with a letter or letters. Also, certain pupils may not be able to divide a word into component syllables in order to recognize a new word. These learners cannot hear specific syllables within a word. Expectations in learning to read on the part of each pupil should be realistic. Pressuring and forcing pupils to learn to read is rarely successful. If pupils instead develop wholesome attitudes toward reading, they should individually become the best readers possible. A teacher should not overdo the teaching of any word recognition technique to pupils.

## Comprehension of Content

Having skill in utilizing diverse word recognition techniques is useful only as they aid pupils to comprehend or understand what is being read. There are several important kinds of comprehension which need emphasizing in teaching and learning.

1. reading to comprehend and understand relevant facts. The teacher needs to guide pupils to read for important factual information.

2. reading to skim content. There are important names, dates, and places for pupils to gain through skimming of a paragraph, several paragraphs, a page, or pages of written materials.
3. reading for sequential ideas. Here, the pupils needs to develop skill in attaching order to what is being read. There are, for example, events that occurred first, second, third, and so forth in a specific sequence.
4. reading for a main idea. Pupils learn to develop a main idea by relating specific facts. The main idea obtained can be supported by factual ideas gained.
5. reading critically. The pupil learns to separate facts from opinions, and accurate statements from inaccurate statements when reading critically.
6. reading creatively. As a result of reading, the learner achieves unique, new ideas when engaging in creative reading.

## Some Concluding Ideas

The following generalizations are important for parents, and teachers to consider in terms of the child's welfare in the reading curriculum:

1. Pupils individually should be successful in progressing continuously in the reading curriculum.
2. Labels of failure should definitely not be attached to any pupil.

3. Learners on an individual basis should be praised when improved achievement is in evidence in the curriculum area of reading.
4. There are many plans of reading instruction to help pupils in learning to read well. If a pupil does not benefit from the use of one method of reading instruction, other methods are also available.
5. Reading materials utilized should be interesting to pupils.
6. Parents and guardians should do much reading and thus set an example for their children in this important curriculum area.
7. The home should have ample reading materials which each learner can benefit from.
8. Parents and guardians need to show much interest in the reading achievement of each learner.

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## DEVELOPING THE READING CURRICULUM

Situations in society reflect change and modification. The curriculum in the school/class setting must also change. Reading, the first of the three R's (reading, writing, and arithmetic), needs to be evaluated rather continuously to reflect needed change in objectives, learning activities. and appraisal procedures.

## OBJECTIVES IN READING

Teachers and supervisors need to select carefully those objectives which pupils are to attain. Each objective selected must guide learners to achieve optimally in reading.

There are numerous questions which need answers pertaining to assisting pupils to read well. These questions include the following:

1. Should measurably stated or general objectives be utilized in teaching/learning situations?

2. How much emphasis should phonetic analysis receive in the reading curriculum?

3. Should a unique code be utilized in beginning and remedial reading programs? These codes might include the Initial Teaching Alphabet, color coding, and diacritical marking systems. Each of the above named plans of reading instruction is geared to helping pupils associate sounds (phonemes) with symbols (graphemes) in a consistent manner. Thus, irregularly spelled sounds would then be greatly minimized.

4. How should objectives in the reading curriculum be sequenced? The involved issue pertains to who should be involved in determining order in learning. The teacher? Pupils with teacher guidance? The programmer?

The above named issues need studying and analyzing. Desired tenets then need to be implemented.

Which objectives might many reading specialists recommend for pupil attainment?

1. diverse word attack skills. These include phonics, syllabication, use of context, picture, and configuration clues, as well as structural analysis.

2. variety in kinds of comprehension. Thus, reading to follow directions, to acquire sequence of content, to gain facts, to achieve main ideas, and to attain generalizations are relevant. Additional worthy kinds of comprehension skills to emphasize in teaching and learning include critical reading, creative reading, and reading to solve problems.

3. positive attitudes. Pupils then develop an inward desire in wanting to learn to read as well as wishing to read in order to learn. Attitudinal goals are relevant for pupils to achieve. If pupils possess desirable attitudes, they should increase skills to identify new words correctly. Also, increased skills should be in the offing to comprehend subject matter more effectively in reading.

Each general objective listed above may be stated in measurable terms, if desired. The following measureable objectives, for example, might be written involving word attack skills:

1. Given five new words, the pupil will identify each in context, utilizing phonetic analysis.

2. Given ten new words, the pupil will identify each by dividing into syllables.

Olson and Dillner[1] list valuable study skills which provide objectives for pupils to achieve. The listed skills are:

LOCATING INFORMATION

using card catalogues
using encyclopedias
using maps
using telephone books
reading graphs
reading tables
using tables
using indexes
using glossaries
using chapter headings
using chapter subheadings

ORGANIZING INFORMATION

taking notes
outlining

IMPROVING RATE

skimming
adjusting rate to purpose
applying study skills

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN READING

Learning activities in reading need to be varied. Why? The learning styles of each pupil need adequate attention. By using a variety of materials in the reading curriculum, each pupil may be guided to achieve optimally. How might reading then be taught so that each pupil may achieve as well as individual differences permit?

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[1] Joanne P. Olson and Martha H. Dillner. *Learning to Teach Reading in the Elementary School*. New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1976, page 713.

1. Use of programmed materials. Programmed textbooks might utilized in selected classrooms in the teaching of reading. The programmer determines what pupils are to learn (the objectives) as well as the means (learning activities) to achieve the desired ends.

Thus, a pupil reads a short paragraph, answers a completion item posited by the programmer, and checks his/her responses with the correct answer as given by the programmer. In a programmed textbook, the pupil then reads a short selection and answers a completion item appearing underneath the selection read. After responding, the learner checks his/her response with that given by the programmer. Read, respond, and check are utilized continuously and consistently in methods of instruction emphasizing the utilization of programmed materials.

Advantages given for utilizing programmed materials include the following:

A. learners individually may progress at their own unique optimal levels of achievement. A pupil does not need to keep up with any other learner in recommended uses of programmed instruction.

B. learners rather continuously may experience success in each sequential step of learning. Good programmed materials have been field tested in pilot studies. Thus, each sequential item provides opportunities for continuous successful progress of the involved learner. Generally, pupils individually should be successful on 90 to 95 percent of items responded to in quality programmed materials.

C. each learner knows immediately if his/her response was right or wrong. By checking the personal response with that given by the programmer, immediate knowledge of results is possible.

D. reinforcement of learning can be in evidence if a pupil responds correctly to a programmed item. If a pupil responded incorrectly, he/she still knows the correct answer and is also ready for interacting with the next sequential item.

Arnstine[2] writes the following involving disadvantages in using programmed materials:

> Effective teaching that results in genuine learning is hard to come by; it will always require great effort and good judgment—often performed on the spot, when confronting students. A world in which teaching were virtually always effective, and learning always assured, might be a benign one in which to live (even if men, with no further proglems to solve, might throw down roots and turn into vegetables). But it is not the world that we live in. In our world, we try to do better what we think is worth doing, and our potential means and instrumentalities must be judged in that light. Programmed materials will not perform miracles; they might be judged in the same way in which we judge wordbooks, filmstrips, and pencils. Nor, are any of these things simply neutral—equally capable of being used for good or ill. If a pencil were neutral, we should have no qualms about giving one to an infant. Programs, too, may cause some damage if swallowed indiscriminately.

2. Uses of basal readers. There are numerous educators who recommend utilization of basal readers to guide learner progress in reading. Basal readers are published by reputable publishing companies, in most cases. Quality individuals in the area of reading, in many situations, are writers and editors of basal readers.

No doubt, the physical appearance, the illustrations, and subject matter content in basal readers are more appealing to learners than ever before. Textbook publishing companies spend considerable money in revising content in basal readers to provide for needs, interests, and purposes of individual pupils. The manual section of basal readers provides new and experienced teachers numerous objectives, learning activities, and evaluation procedures for each lesson and unit of study.

Advantages in utilizing basal readers in the curriculum include:

A. basal readers may provide learners appropriate scope and sequence to acquire needed skills in reading.

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[2] Donald Arnstine. "Rote or Reasoning: Some Cautions on Programming". High School Journal, (May, 1968), pp. 353-364.

B. the manual section of a reputable basal reader may provide teachers with a set of learning activities which guide learners to develop sequential skills in word recognition and comprehension.

C. most schools use basal readers to guide learner progress in reading. Thus, basal readers provide stability in the curriculum in terms of utilizing teacher procedures which have endured in time and space.

D. a developed curriculum, such as the utilization of basal readers, needs to be in the offing for teachers. Otherwise, to develop a reading curriculum from its beginning might consume an excessive amount of time on the part of the teacher.

Lapp and Flood[3] list the following pertaining to disadvantages in using basal readers:

1. The vocabulary and sentence patterns do not match the spoken language of the children.

2. The content is not interesting to children.

3. The books are developed for graded levels and the child is forced to read in the book for his grade level.

4. The manual is looked on as the last word in instructional guidance and must be followed to the last letter. As a result, the program is not adjusted to individual needs and instruction often becomes sterile and uncreative.

5. Use of a basal leads to a uniform three-achievement-level grouping plan.

6. Children are asked to do workbook pages which they may have mastered.

7. The basal reader provides the sole source of materials used in teaching reading skills to children.

8. Basals do not provide for different learning styles or different modes of instruction.

9. Basals are not based on a sound theory of learning.

10. Basal series do not provide instructional procedures.

11. The content often furthers sexual and class stereotypes.

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[3] Diane Lapp and James Flood. Teaching Reading to Every Child. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1978.

3. Use of individualized reading. Individualized reading emphasizes the utilizing of appealing library books in guiding pupils to develop interest and purpose in comprehending content. An adequate number of books on diverse topic and different reading levels needs to be available for pupil choice. The teacher may introduce selected library books to learners to encourage their development of appropriate skills and attitudes in reading. However, the pupil individually selects which library book to read. If a learner cannot settle down in reading a book, the teacher then needs to suggest possible titles.

The pupil, after having completed the reading of a library book needs conference time with the teacher to appraise word recognition skills, comprehension abilities, and attitudes toward reading. The teacher may wish to record progress of each pupil after the conference has been completed. Learners, individually, may also wish to select appraisal procedures to assess progress in reading. The selected evaluation procedure might involve one or more of the following:

1. drawing a picture or a series of illustrations covering content read.
2. writing a different ending for the story read.
3. dramatizing selected portions of a library book.
4. making a diorama covering major generalizations read.

There are numerous advantages given in emphasizing individualized reading in the curriculum:

1. pupils may pace their own progress in reading individual library books. When basal readers are utilized, pupils in a group being taught need to adjust their progress to other learners in the set. Thus, individual differences among learners might not be adequately provided for. In individualized reading, however, each pupil may progress optimally.

2. the pupil may select reading materials that are personally interesting, meaningful, as well as purposeful.

3. each pupil may pace his/her own rate of progress in reading. Since pupils may differ much from each other in reading achievement, each learner can progress as rapidly as possible in reading self-selected materials.

4. individualized reading might well meet personal learning styles of selected learners. The existentialist desires to make choices and decisions, as well as accept ultimate consequences. Individualized reading may well provide for personal needs of learners who possess existentialism as a philosophy of life.

Carlton and Moore[4] list significant questions pertaining to using individualized reading in the curriculum. These questions are:

1. What is individualized reading?
2. What is the teacher's responsibility?
3. What is the best time to begin an individualized program?
4. Are there any special materials needed for an individualized reading program?
5. How does a teacher acquire enough materials for an individualized reading program?
6. How does a teacher know which books to give a pupil?
7. How can a teacher be sure a child is reading at the level where he should be?
8. Can children be expected to select their own reading material wisely?
9. How do pupils develop a basic vocabulary in an individualized reading program?
10. How are word recognition skills incorporated into individualized reading programs?
11. What is the advantage of using individualized reading instead of the basal reader approach?
12. How does the teacher evaluate pupil progress in an individualized reading program?
13. Why do some studies show little difference in results between individualized reading programs and the more traditional approach of using basal reading with the group?
14. What are some of the advantages of the individualized reading approach?

## IN SUMMARY

Teachers and supervisors need to analyze diverse plans and procedures in the teaching of reading. Each recommended method has its strengths and weaknesses. Ultimately, a chosen reading program must provide for the needs, interests, and abilities of a given set of learners. Each pupil then might attain optimally in the reading curriculum.

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[4] Lessie Carlton and Robert H. Moore. "Individualized Reading", NEA Journal (November, 1964) pp. 11 and 12.

Cooper and Worden[5] wrote:

> The reading program in the elementary school is a systematic plan for teaching reading that includes objectives, needs of learners, instructional procedures, and resources. This program should center around classroom instruction and should not follow a remedial concept. There are certain programmatic and instructional characteristics of the effective reading program that should be considered in deciding what a school will do to improve its reading instruction.
>
> The framework within which the classroom reading program should operate is the diagnostic teaching concept, which is an ongoing five-step process that includes (1) gathering relevant background information, (2) generating alternative actions, (3) evaluating and selecting alternatives to carry out, (4) teaching and (5) evaluating the results to determine the next steps needed. Diagnostic teaching is a systematic process that depends on the teacher as a decision maker who uses teaching and testing as diagnostic tools.
>
> An effective diagnostic teacher understands the reading process, uses a variety of assessment procedures, has many organizational patterns to follow, is able to select from a variety of instructional strategies and materials appropriate to student needs, and has a management system that encompasses more than record keeping.

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[5] J. David Cooper and Thomas W. Worden, The Classroom Reading Program in the Elementary School. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1983, pp. 23 and 24.

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# DETERMINING READING LEVELS

There are diverse means to determine reading levels of individual students. In most situations, a learner is placed with other students emphasizing a given grade level in reading achievement. However, a vital question is raised pertaining to the actual reading level of that student. Chronological age may mean very little in terms of reading levels of specific students. Thus, a younger student may read better than an older student. It behooves the teacher to determine the reading level of each involved learner.

## An Informal Method

In utilizing the 100 running word method, a teacher needs no standardized test to ascertain a student's present achievement level in reading. In the present textbook being utilized in any curriculum area, the teacher at the beginning of the school year needs to mark off one hundred consecutive words. The one hundred words must come from the beginning of the text and should be a representative selection.

A testing area needs to be in evidence whereby the teacher and a learner have a private place, removed from other students, to administer the 100 running word test. The student reads the selection orally to the teacher. The teacher records how many words out of 100 were not identified correctly. For a textbook to be on the instructional level, the involved student needs to identify 95 to 98% of the running words correctly. If a learner identifies all words correctly, the involved book is on the recreational livel of reading. There is no room for growth in learning to recognize new words within the scope of the reading selection. If a student would increasingly miss words below that of getting 95 percent correct in terms of identification, the selection becomes complex. There are too many new words then for the student to master within the framework of each 100 words read.

A second dimension exists in terms of evaluating reading levels of individual students within the framework of the 100 running words, described previously. The involved student also needs to be able to answer three of four questions correctly covering the context read. Thus, comprehension of content is also being appraised. Relevant, vital questions need to be selected by the teacher to evaluate learner comprehension in reading.

Pertaining to the 100 running word method in ascertaining reading levels of students, Ediger [1] wrote the following pertaining to reading in the social studies:

> There are several ways to assist the social studies teacher in determing the instructional level of reading for each pupil. An informal method may be used. Here, the teacher would have a pupil read orally, approximately, 100 running words from the beginning of his or her social studies textbook. The child has not practiced reading the content previously. The learner should be able to orally read correctly as a minimum about 95 words. Perhaps the maximum number of words a child should be able to read correctly would by 98 out of 100 running words. In revealing his comprehension on the material read, the pupil should be able to answer correctly about three out of four questions asked by the teacher. There is a problem involved here in determing the level of complexity of questions the teacher should select to ask pupils in assessing.comprehension. The above standards relating to oral pronunciation of words as well as comprehension of content are approximate. The informal method of determing reading levels of children should be given at the beginning of a school year. Supposing a pupil reads correctly 50 percent of the words read orally to the teacher, the chances are comprehension will suffer greatly when struggling over word recognition. In a situation such as this, a child cannot benefit much from reading content from a social studies textbook written for his or her level. If a pupil without previous practice can consistently read 100 running words correctly from his social studies textbook and answer all questions correctly, the chances are this learning activity is not as challenging as it could be. There is no room for this child to learn to identify new words since he/she knows all the words read from selections without any previous practice. This situation might be excellent for the learner if new learnings in social studies are being developed continuously and meaningfully. Informal methods of helping to evaluate the reading level of each child are, of course, not a panacea. It is an approach that can be used along with other techniques.

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[1] Marlow Ediger, Social Studies Curriculum in the Elementary School, 2nd edition. Kirksville, Missouri, Northeast Missouri State University, 1980, pp. 70 and 71.

The 100 running word method does not:

1. utilize standardized tests in determining reading levels of learners.

2. have a norm group with which to compare test results of learner achievement in the classroom.

3. emphasize using other reading materials to determine reading levels, other than content presently utilized in the reading curriculum.

## The Cloze Method

The cloze method also does not use standardized norm referenced tests to determine present reading levels of individual learners. Rather reading materials presently used in any curriculum area provide content to use in the cloze method. Approxiamtely 250 words should be inherent in the reading selection. Every fifth word needs to be deleted and shown with a line for the blank space. The blanks for each missing word should be congruent in order to provide no clues to the reader as to the identification of the unknown word.

In a one to one situation, the student reads the selection orally to the teacher. A proficent reader will be able to ascertain which words will fit in context into the blank spaces. For a book to be on the student's present reading level the involved learner needs to respond with 44 to 57 per cent accuracy in determining the unknown words. Going above the above named per cents given, the book becomes increasingly on the recreational level of reading, whereas going below the given per cents, the reading materials represnet more so the frustrational level of reading subject matter.

Involving a cloze method in determining individual reading levels of learners, Hall[2], et. al. wrote:

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[2] Hall, Ribovich, and Ramig, Reading and the Elementary School Child, 2nd edition. New York, 1979, pg. 124.

An activity that can be used to show the use of combined context and phonic cues is a modified cloze procedure, in which the first letter or first two letters of words are given while the rest of the word is deleted:

> The children wanted to b____ a treehouse. They wanted to have one big enough for six p____. They were looking for a good pl____ to put it. They looked for a sh____ tree with lots of br____. They picked the oak tree in John's y____. It took them six days to f____ the treehouse.

For children who do not yet have much reading vocabulary, the above procedure can be used with single sentences using known vocabulary except for the word with only the first or first two letters given.

A cloze method in determining reading levels emphasizes:

1. using content that learners will actually be reading to determine his/her present reading level.

2. a personal relationship between teacher and pupil to ascertain the latter's present level of reading accomplishment.

## The Maze Method

The maze method to determine reading levels of students is closely related to the cloze approach. In the maze method, every fifth word is deleted within a given selection. The learner should have no previous practice in reading the selection to determine reading levels. For each omitted word, the reader selects from among three alternatives as to which is the correct word.

Involving the maze method, Harris and Sipay[3] wrote:

> Another technique that may be used to assess or to monitor comprehension is the maze technique (Guthrie et al. 1974). Basically, it involves selecting a series of 120-word passages from graded materials that have not been previously read. Each sentence is modified by deleting every fifth or tenth word and providing three choices for it. This modified cloze test is read silently by the children, who are to select the appropriate word from among the three choices (the correct answer and two incorrect answers, one of which is the same part of speech as the correct answer, the other a different part of speech).

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[3] Albert J. Harris and Edward R. Sipay, How to Teach Reading, New York, New York, 1979, pp. 330 and 331.

Teachers should not wait until a standardized test or mastery test is given before assessing comprehension. There should be ongoing assessment, the frequency of which will depend upon how well the child has mastered the skills; the weaker the skill or ability, the more frequent the need for assessment. Daily reading lessons provide an excellent opportunity to sample a child's ability to comprehend written language. Comprehension questions may be answered orally or in writing. After the questions have been answered, they can be compared during a group session, and the answers about which there is some disagreement or question can be discussed as to why certain responses are correct, why some are more acceptable than others, and why others are unacceptable. If a child is having difficulty answering questions, the reasons for the difficulty should be determined.

The Maze Method:

1. is one approach in ascertaining reading levels of students.

2. emphasizes a multiple choice method in having learners select the unknown word from among given alternatives.

3. may be utilized along with other means to ascertain reading levels of learners.

## Standardized Tests to Determine Reading Levels

There are numerous reading tests which are standardized and useful in determining reading levels of individual students. Readers are referred to the Mental Measurements Yearbooks of which Oscar Buros is the Editor to read reviews of diverse standardized tests in reading, as well as other curriculum areas. Specialists provide the reviews in terms of strengths and weaknesses of published, standardized tests. The Eighth Mental Measurements Yearbook is the most recent publication, published by Gryphon Press.

Measurement specialists critically appraise two relevant concepts in the Mental Measurements Yearbooks. These are validity and reliability. Validity pertains to a test measuring what it purports to measure. Thus, does a specific standardized test measure a students reading ability? Reliability, as a measurement concept, pertains to consistency of results obtained when a student's achievement is measured using a specific standardized test. Thus, for example, if a student takes a test to determine reading levels and takes the test two times, are the results consistent to truly ascertain a student's specific level of reading? If a learner measures 9.2 grade level the first time and 4.6 grade level the second measurement, the discrepancy is great as to test results. No judgement can then be made of the student's present level of progress, in situations such as these.

The Mental Measurement Yearbooks will provide data on validity and reliability for each published standardized test. The data given is evaluated by specialists in testing and measurement. Thus, to be valid, a test must measure present achievement of each person in reading in order to ascertain current reading levels. Also, the test needs to measure consistently to be reliable.

The Gilmore Oral Reading Test, among others, attempts to determine the present reading level of the involved student. The teacher, principal, or supervisor may administer the Gilmore Oral Reading Test to one student at a time. A quiet place needs to be found to administer the test whereby other learners cannot listen in. The Manual must be followed with utmost care in administering the test.

As the student reads content to the test giver, the kinds of errors made in reading are written by the teacher. The following kinds of errors in reading are recognized in the Gilmore Oral Reading Test.[4]

| Type of Error | Rule for Marking | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| SUBSTITUTIONS<br>A sensible or real word substituted for the word in the paragraph. | Write in substituted word. | black<br>The boy is back of the girl.<br>girl<br>See the girls.<br>most<br>He is almost ready to go. |

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[4] John V. Gilmore. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc,. 1952, pp. 8, 9.

### MISPRONUNCIATIONS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A nonsense word which may be produced by (1) false accentuation; (2) wrong pronunciation of vowels or consonants; or (3) omission, addition, or insertion of one or more letters. | Write in word phonetically (if time permits) or draw line through word. | (1) $\overset{\text{sĭm′-bŏl-ĭk}}{\text{symbolic}}$ (or) ~~symbolic~~<br>(2) $\overset{\text{blĕs′-fo͞ol}}{\text{blissful}}$ (or) ~~blissful~~<br>(3) $\overset{\text{blĕnt}}{\text{bent}}$ (or) ~~bent~~ |

### WORDS PRONOUNCED BY EXAMINER

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A word on which subject hesitates for 5 seconds.[1] (The word is then pronounced by the examiner.) | Make two checks above word pronounced. | It is a $\overset{\checkmark\checkmark}{\text{fascinating}}$ story. |

### DISREGARD OF PUNCTUATION

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Failure to observe punctuation. | Mark punctuation disregarded with an "x." | Jack, my brother$\overset{x}{,}$ is in the navy. |

### INSERTIONS (including Additions)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A word (or words) inserted at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a sentence or line of text. | Write in inserted word. (or words). | The dog and $\overset{\text{the}}{\wedge}$ cat are fighting.<br>$\overset{\text{I}}{\wedge}$See the girl. |

### HESITATIONS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A pause of at least 2 seconds before pronouncing a word.[2] | Make a check above the the word on which hesitation occurs. | It is a $\overset{\checkmark}{\text{fascinating}}$ story. |

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[1] If the subject hesitates on a word for 2 seconds, a check mark is placed above the word to indicate a hesitation (see Hesitations). If the word is pronounced by the examiner, a second check mark is made above the word. This counts as one error--a "words pronounced by Examiner" error.

[2] If a pupil hesitates and then makes a mispronunciation or substitution error, this is counted only as a mispronunciation (or substitution) error.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| REPETITIONS | | |
| A word, part of a word, or group of words, repeated.[3] | Draw wavy line beneath word (or words) repeated. | He thought he saw a whale. |
| OMISSIONS | | |
| One or more words omitted. (If a complete line is omitted, this is counted as one omission error.) | Encircle the word (or words) omitted. | Mother does all of her work with great care. |

The Manual section indicates which of ten sequential selections contained in the test provides a starting point for any student taking the test. Also, in the Manual, it indicates at which point to stop testing any given student taking the test.

Comprehension questions also appear in the test. These questions are asked of learners after reading a selection.

A standardized test used to determine reading levels of students emphasizes:

1. results of involved students presently taking the test to be compared with a norm group.

2. results from the test being utilized to determine specific reading materials in the ongoing language arts curriculum.

3. uniformity of test items and procedures being utilized in selecting textbooks for the present reading curriculum in the school and class setting.

## Using an Informal Reading Inventory

Informal Reading Inventories, hereinafter called IRI, may also be used to ascertain reading levels of students. Content for developing an IRI comes from the series of basal series presently being utilized in the reading curriculum. The subject matter then needs to reflect content on the present grade level that the learner is in. Also, one grade level below and above the student's present grade level needs to be added to the IRI. Thus, the resulting IRI will have content from the series presently being utilized covering one grade level below, the present grade level of the involved student, and one grade level above. The student to be tested, for example, is in grade three; therefore the reading materials in the IRI would come from the present reading series being utilized convering gr ades two, three, and four. A representative selection needs to come from the beginning of each grade level textbook. To check on the selection being representative, a readability formula may be used to ascertain if the selections for each of the grade levels are representative for that respective grade level involved.

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[3] Even if a pupil repeats a word, part of a word, or group of words several times, this is considered as only one error. If a pupil makes a mispronunciation or substitution error and then corrects himself immediately, do not count as a repetition error, but only as a mispronunciation (or substitution) error.

The pupil reading the content orally to the test giver should pronounce approximately 95 per cent of the words correctly from the selection covering any specific grade level, if the contents are on the instructional level of the involved reader. Word recognition that increasingly goes below the 95 per cent figure will hinder in comprehension of ideas.

Of comprehension questions responded to, approximately seventy five per cent should be answered correctly involving each selection. Thus, a third greder reading on his/her present grade level satisfactorily needs to identify approxamately 95 per cent of the running words correctly, as well as answer correctly 75 per cent of the comprehension questions. If the involved third grader cannot achieve these levels of proficiency, he/she needs to try the second grade reading selection. The learner may then be able to achieve the 95 per cent word identification level and be able to answer 75 per cent of the comprehension items correctly.

A third grader who recognizes 100 per cent of the words correctly and answers all comprehension questions correctly on the third grade level of materials used might, of course, need more challenging reading content, such as on those used on the fourth grade level.

Each student needs to read subject matter that is meaningful and understandable. Thus, the presented reading achievement level of each student needs to be determined and appropriate materials selected.

## Using Isolated Words

New basic words from a textbook may be taken to ascertain reading levels of students. Thus, for example, a third grade basal reader presently being utilized in the third grade may provide the needed words. In the manual section of the involved basal reader, the authors have listed new words for each story or unit. A given set of words may be selected for student oral reading. The learner should have no previous practice with these words. Other students should not listen to the words being pronounced by the involved reader since each will also be tested later to determine if the basal reader is on his/her present level of achievement in reading.

If a student can identify eighty per cent of the listed words correctly, the reader should be on the learner's present level of achievement. If the identification of the listed words goes below the eighty per cent level, reading comprehension will go downhill. Should the student recognize ninty per cent or higher of the listed words, the involved learner may need a more challenging reader.

Harris and Sipay wrote:

> The cleverness that some children show in using context clues makes it possible for them to conceal many of the uncertainties that plague them in attempting to recognize or decode words. To get a true picture of sheer word-recognition ability, one has to test for ability to recognize words when they are out of any meaningful content. For this purpose, a child should read a list of unrelated words.

A word list has two purposes. First, we want to know if the child can recognize the word at sight, with little or no hesitation. If the word is not recognized at sight, the next question is whether the child can work out the pronunciation. In this, an understanding of the child's method of decoding an unknown word, and the factors that contribute to success or failure, is more important then getting a score. The child should be encouraged to think out loud as he tries to figure out the word. A child staring blankly at a page does not reveal much, but if he can verbalize his thoughts, we can find out what he is trying to do and perhaps why he succeeds or fails.[5]

The word list approach emphasizes that:

1. the new words are representative of those listed by the authors in the manual section.

2. the number selected should harmonize with child growth and development characteristics. Fatigue and tiredness in identifying an excessive number of new words should not be inherent in the testing situation.

## In Summary

There are numerous means available to ascertain reading levels of students.

1. The 100 running word method is an informal approach. Students need to recognize 95 to 98% of the running words correctly. Comprehension of content should be at the seventy five percent level of what has been read. There are no expenses involved in utilizing the 100 running word approach, other that time investments in administering the test to individual learners. A place removed from other learners needs to be in evidence to secure meaningful results for each student. Thus, other students should not be able to listen to ongoing testing situations. Each student must not have previous practice on the content being read orally to the administrator of the test.

2. A cloze method also requires no expenses in securing and buying tests. As is true of the 100 running word method, the cloze procedure utilizes content from the basal textbooks being utilized. Every fifth word is omitted in a reading selection. No previous practice should be inherent in the selection being read orally by the involved learner. The reader needs to identify correctly 44 to 57 per cent of the omitted words if the textbook (from which the reading selction was used) is on the reader's personal level of reading.

3. A maze method also uses content from basal textbooks presently being utilized to determine reading levels of learners. Every fifth word is deleted from the representative selection chosen for students to read orally. For each deletion, there are three multiple choice items

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[5] Albert J. Harris and Edward R. Sipay. New York: Longman, Inc., 1980, page 233.

--each emphasizing a single word. The involved reader chooses the correct response from among the three choices. There needs to be approximately ninty per cent of correct responses if involved textbook being utilized is on the present reading level of the student. Going below the nintieth per cent figure indicates comprehension of content will increasingly become more difficult for the individual student.

4. Standardized tests, such as the Gilmore Oral Reading Test may be used to determine reading levels of students. COntent for determining the present achievement level of a learner then does not come from the textbooks presently being utilized. However, valuable information amy be obtained of the learner from the results of the Gilmore Oral Reading Test. Specific kinds of reading errors are then identified. Remediation efforts should be emphasized to overcome these difficulties.

5. Informal Reading Inventories (IRI) are based on content from the present series of textbooks being utilized. Selections covering content from below and above the present grade level of the learner are utilized in the test, as well as content from his/her present grade level of achievement.

6. Isolated words may also be utilized to determine reading levels of students. These words come from a basal reading series to be used in the curriculum. The manual section of a basal reader generally lists the new words contained in the textbook, as determined by the writer(s) of the series.

After determining present reading levels of each student, suitable materials to read need to be selected for learners individually. Students need to achieve optimally in reading.

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LEARNING AND THE HANDWRITING CURRICULUM

There are selected criteria which psychologists emphasize as being vital to implement in teaching-learning situations. Emphasizing relevant standards guides each pupil to achieve optimally in the handwriting curriculum, as well as in the curriculum of life. Which principles from the psychology of learning might a teacher then emphasize in handwriting?

## Principles of Learning

The teacher needs to provide interesting experiences for pupils. Too frequently, drill is utilized in attempting to have pupils achieve goals pertaining to legibility in the handwriting arena. The use of excessive drill may hinder pupils from becoming interested in learning. Rather, learners need to experience diverse kinds of handwriting experiences. These might include writing business and friendly letters, announcements, plays, poems, stories, and thank you notes. Within the framework of each of these activities, pupils can be guided to write legibly.

Pupils need to perceive purpose in learning. Thus, each pupil may see reasons for participating in ongoing activities. Each learner then must understand why there needs to be proper proportion of lower and upper case letters, appropriate alignment of words, proper spacing between letters within a word as well as between words, legible slant of manuscript and cursive letters, and proper formation of each written letter. To guide pupils to perceive purpose in learning is time well spent.

Provision needs to be made for pupils on individual diverse levels of achievement. Not all pupils, for example, will be ready to make the transition from manuscript to cursive writing at the same time. Nor will pupils in a class be at the same/similar level of achievement in the writing of business and friendly letters. Thus, the teacher needs to notice the present achievement level of each pupil in handwriting. Learning experiences then need to be provided to guide each pupil to achieve sequential, continuous optimal progress.

Learners need ample opportunities to appraise their own progress. No doubt, some of the best appraisal is self-evaluation. If a person can perceive the need (or needs) to achieve optimally, the chances are greater efforts may be applied in this direction. Thus, in evaluating the self in handwriting, the pupil may appraise his/her own products against that of models presented in reputable handwriting scales. Or, the involved pupil may compare personal exhibited handwriting with models in reputable handwriting textbooks. The pupil may also be guided to compare previous samples of handwriting with that exhibited presently to notice progress. Self evaluation may well stimulate a person to greater efforts.

Pupil success needs reinforcing. Each learner can do better than previously in handwriting. Thus, success on an individual basis in learning may be in evidence. Success may well be its own reward for learning. Praise, verbally and/or nonverbally, from the teacher for improved individual pupil performance may also serve as a reinforcer. There are selected educators who recommend physical prizes be given for specific levels of performance and progress.

Motivation in learning is vital. Pupils individually need to experience challenging learning activities. However, that which is overwhelming to any pupil should generally not be emphasized. Thus, to develop motivated pupils, new objectives need to be achievable. If ends are excessively easy to achieve, the learner may not feel motivated. To achieve reasonable objectives, pupils need to experience activities which release adequate energy to attain optimally in handwriting.

### Issues in the Teaching of Handwriting

There are numerous issues inherent in the teaching of handwriting. Situations then exist in which there are no clearcut right or wrong answers to the teaching of handwriting. Which issues need analyzing and untimate synthesis?

1. Should reputable handwriting textbooks provide major sequential learnings for pupils? Or, should an activity centered approach be utilized in which handwriting skills are emphasized as needed in functional writing situations?

2. Who should select objectives, learning activities, and evaluation procedures in the handwriting curriculum? Should the teacher be the dominant determiner of the curriculum, or should teacher-pupil planning be utilized to determine ends, means to achieve objectives, as well as appraisal techniques?

3. Should measurably stated objectives (behaviorism) be emphasized in the area of handwriting instruction? Thus, with these specific ends, the teacher can measure if a pupil has/has not attained the desired objectives

after instruction. Or, should humanism be the dominant psychology of learning being followed in the handwriting curriculum? Humanism emphasized that pupils are involved in the making of'curricular decisions. Thus, not all pupils will be achieving the same objectives, nor will the objectives be stated in measurable terms. General objectives harmonize more with humanism as a psychology of learning.

## In Conclusion

There are numerous relevant issues in the handwriting curriculum which need resolving. A recommended procedure to resolve these discrepancies might well be to utilize relevant criteria pertaining to teaching and learning from the psychology of education. Learnings for pupils then need to be interesting, purposeful, and motivating. Pupils need to experience success in learning on an individual basis. Reinforcement in learning is relevant; thus, succes in learning is vital!

# OBJECTIVES IN THE HANDWRITING CURRICULUM

Teachers, principals, and supervisors need to select vital objectives for pupils to achieve in the school curriculum. Legible handwriting, among other ends, is vital for learners to acquire. Pupils need to communicate written content to others in an effective manner. Thus, relevant skills in handwriting need incorporating into purposeful writing experiences, such as writing business and friendly letters, announcements, thank you notes, notes of commendation, poems, stories, plays, and letters of sympathy. .

## Essentials in Teaching Handwriting

There are selected language arts educators who recomend a basics or essentialist means of teaching handwriting. Thus, a reputable series of handwriting textbooks may provide appropriate scope and sequence in the handwriting curriculum. Each lesson in the textbook needs appropriate readiness experiences prior to pupils actually practicing that which is stated in the recommended objectives. Learning activities to achieve desired ends may be those specifically presented by writers of the adopted basal handwriting series. Continually, as well as ultimately, the teacher must appraise if desired objectives have been achieved by pupils.

Assumptions underlying the utilization of handwriting textbooks in teaching-learning situations may well include the following:

1. Textbook writers do an adequate analysis of worthwhile objectives for pupils to achieve. Appropriate sequential tasks and appraisal procedures are also in evidence.

2. Textbook writers are specialists in the handwriting curriculum. Teachers could not duplicate or surpass textbook writers' endeavors.

3. The teacher does not have the time to select objectives, experiences, and evaluation procedures in each curriculum area. Utilizing a reputable basal handwriting textbook can save the teacher much time in preparing for teaching-learning situations.

4. Handwriting experts in writing textbooks have selected vital, basic learnings for all pupils to attain. Research studies might also have been included in these handwriting textbooks.

Reasons which might be given for not utilizing basal handwriting textbooks in teaching and learning can include the following:

1. Teachers need to be creative and adapt the handwriting curriculum to the present achievement level of each learner. The teacher is in a better position to know where each pupil is achieving compared to those who write textbooks in the teaching of handwriting.

2. Handwriting should be taught as the need arises rather than emphasizing scope and sequence as defined within the confines of basal handwriting textbooks.

Which essentials might be considered basic learnings in the handwriting curriculum?

1. Pupils need to form legible upper and lower case letters in manuscript as well as cursive writing.

2. Proper spacing between letters and words must be in evidence.

3. Appropriate slant of letters is necessary to aid in communicating content accurately to others.

4. There needs to be proper proportion of letters in writing.

5. It is important to align letters and words properly.

## An Activity Centered Handwriting Curriculum

There are selected language arts specialists who advocate an activity centered writing curriculum.. Thus, handwriting is correlated and fused with capitalization, punctuation, spelling, as well as the writing of viable, sequential paragraphs. The content for the writing curriculum may come from diverse curriculum areas, including social studies, science and health, mathematics, reading, art, music, and physical education. Content utilized in writing is selected on the basis of need of the involved pupil.

The teacher may develop learning centers to emphasize an activity centered curriculum. The pupil may then sequentially select tasks from these diverse stations. The teacher stimulates and motivates pupils individually to achieve optimal development on each task being pursued. The learner then may choose, from among diverse options, as to what to learn (the objective), as well as means (activities and experiences) to achieve desired ends.

One center in the classroom setting may be labeled as a "Letter Writing" station. Tasks that pupils might pursue here could pertain to writing business and/or friendly letters. Utilitarian values are involved in this writing experience. For example, the business letter is written and mailed to order free or inexpensive charts, pictures, and other information directly related to problem solving experiences in an ongoing unit of study. The writer of the letter actually receives a response (or responses) to the mailed letter. Or, in writing a friendly letter, the contents are life-like and real; ultimately the completed letter is mailed to or exchanged with a friend. In writing business and friendly letters, neat, legible handwriting is significant.

A second center might be entitled "Writing Poetry." At this center, pupils individually may select the kind or kinds of verse to write. With adequate readiness experiences, a learner may choose to write one or more of the following:

1. haiku poetry. The first line contains five syllables. The second line has seven syllables followed by five syllables in the third line. Each poem written must have a title. Tanka poems may also be written. Tankas possess five lines with the following number of syllables per line--5,7,5,7,7.

2. couplets and triplets. A couplet contains two written lines, somewhat uniform in length, with ending words rhyming. The triplet has three lines with all ending words rhyming. Preferably, the lines should possess, in degrees, uniform lengths.

3. quatrains and limericks. The quatrain possesses four lines with diverse patterns of rhyme in ending words, e.g. lines one and two as well as lines three and four rhyming, or lines one and three as well as lines two and four may rhyme.

The linerick contains five lines. Lines one, two, and five rhyme as well as lines three and four rhyme.

Legible handwriting becomes a major goal to emphasize at the poetry writing center. The emphasis, however, is upon effective communication of content, rather than a preplanned handwriting curriculum for pupils. Diagnosis and practice of specific skills in handwriting is emphasized as the need arises within the framework of functional and creative writing experiences.

4. Additional learning centers in the school-classroom setting might include the writing of plays, announcements, sympathy notes, thank you letters, book reports, outlines, and summaries.

## In Conclusion

Which method of teaching handwriting could yield most effective results for learners? Should the teacher preplan a handwriting curriculum for pupils emphasizing precise objectives, learning activities to achieve these ends, as well as appraisal procedures to measure progress? Or, should the learner have ample opportunities within a flexible learning environment to choose his/her own goals, experiences, and evaluation procedures in handwriting?

Whichever plan or combination of plans is ultimately selected, each pupil needs to achieve optimally to communicate written content clearly and effectively. Thus, the teacher must obtain the interests of pupils individually, as well as assist them to perceive purpose or reasons for achieving well in the handwriting domain. It is vital to provide for individual differences among pupils in the curriculum!

## Teaching Handwriting in the Elementary School

The best quality of handwriting possible from each pupil is necessary in order that ideas can be effectively communicated to the reader.

Selected criteria should be followed by elementary school teachers when providing learning activities for pupils involving handwriting. The teacher, when following these selected guidelines, should assist pupils to improve over previous performances in handwriting.

1. Learning activities in handwriting for pupils need to be interesting. Too frequently through repetition, pupils have been asked, whether necessary or not, to write certain letters of the alphabet as well as words until "legible" handwriting was in evidence. A dislike for improved handwriting may thus result. "Sameness" in learning experiences does not provide interesting learning activities for pupils.

In varied learning activities involving handwriting, pupils may write friendly letters to friends, parents, brothers and sisters, as well as relatives. The child may also write for free charts or pictures for science and/or social studies units. He can also write thank-you notes for gifts received or a brief summary of a library book that was read. In each of these writing activities, the writer can evaluate the quality of his handwriting, for example, through the use of models from a handwriting booklet.

2. Learning activities in handwriting need to have purpose. Selected weaknesses in pupil handwriting need to be diagnosed by the pupil with teacher guidance. A child who has difficulties in creating letters properly should be encouraged to overcome these weaknesses

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through practice. Purpose is then involved in learning activities involving handwriting. A child whose handwriting reveals weaknesses in spacing between letters and/or words should be challenged to overcome this deficiency. Handwriting activities must be based on individual needs of pupils.

3. Learning activities in handwriting need to provide for each individual pupil in the classroom. Educators have long known that pupils differ from each other, among other things, in capacity, achievement, weight, height, and psychomotor skills. Since pupils differ from each other in many traits, different levels of achievement in handwriting can be expected from pupils. Some pupils write very legibly. Others have extreme difficulty in communicating ideas to others due to faulty handwriting. Each pupil should be guided to improve in the quality of handwriting he now possesses. Not all pupils need practice in writing a legible, capital "B"; some can do this well presently. A child may need much assistance and practice in alignment of letters and words while others do very well in this aspect of handwriting. Some pupils can write for longer periods of time and not become tired of the learning activity in handwriting as compared to other pupils in the classroom. Pupils with teacher assistance can determine variety in methods and approaches to utilize in providing for individual differences in handwriting within a classroom.

4. Learning activities in handwriting need to provide situations involving a transfer of learning. Improved legible handwriting can be developed only if this skill is practiced in functional writing situations. Legible handwriting needs to be practiced whenever pupils engage in written communication in science, social studies, mathematics, language arts, and other curriculum areas in the elementary school.

## In Conclusion

Learning activities for pupils involving handwriting should (a) capture the interests of pupils, (b) be purposeful from the child's point of view, (c) help each pupil to improve in the area of handwriting, and (d) help pupils transfer the skills of handwriting to all phases of written communication.

## EVALUATING PUPIL PROGRESS IN HANDWRITING

A variety of techniques should be utilized by the teacher to evaluate pupil progress in the area of handwriting. The teacher needs to compare pupil achievement now with previous performances in order to determine if each pupils is improving in the quality of handwriting exhibited.

Effective communication can be hindered with poor quality handwriting. The reader will take more time in reading content if the writer engages in poor quality handwriting compared to good handwriting. If the quality of handwriting is very poor, the reader may need to take much time in determining content that is being read.

The teacher needs to ask himself the following question pertaining to each pupil in the classroom -- "Does the pupil exhibit progressively higher quality handwriting than he did in previous times?"

Several techniques to utilize in evaluating pupil achievement in handwriting could be the following:

1. Teacher observation. The teacher can observe specific difficulties that pupils have in handwriting. Pupils will exhibit specific difficulties in daily writing activities such as the writing of outlines, business and friendly letters, summaries, reports, and letters of appreciation. Specific problems in the area of handwriting may pertain to

    (a) the formation of letters. The pupil writes incorrectly a few of the capital and/or small letters of the alphabet in functional writing situations, such as in cursive writing, the "t" is not crossed and may have a loop in it making it appear like the letter "l." The letter "e" is made too tall making it appear as the letter "l."

(b) the spacing of letters and words. The first or second grade pupil in manuscript writing may write the sentence, "He walked home from school." as "He wal ked home f roms chool." The pupil needs assistance in spacing letters properly within a word as well as between words. Pupils in the intermediate or junior high school level may leave no margin on the right-hand side of the paper while writing and crowd words upward or downward where the width of the paper ends, thus hindering communication of ideas.

(c) the proper alignment of words and sentences. If pupils "stay" on the line when engaging in writing activities, more effective communication takes place compared to having letters go below and/or above the line (this, of course, does not refer to those parts of letters which should go below the line, such as a part of each of the following letters going below the line in cursive and manuscript writing -- g, j, p, q, and y).

(d) the proper slant of letters. Communication in writing can be hindered with lack of uniformity of slant of letters making up words.

(e) a lack of neatness in writing. The child may have an excess amount of erasure marks which are not clean on his paper. With the untidy writing that has been done, it is difficult for the reader to read the content readily. The pupil may also have "traced over" certain letters within a word making the print appear "heavy" for these specific letters; other letters within words may have a very light stroke making them difficult to read.

2. Work samples of pupils. The teacher should keep a folder for each pupil. Throughout the school year, the teacher would place written work of each pupil in his folder. Each paper added to the folder would have the date it was written by the pupil. When evaluating achievement in handwriting, the teacher would notice if improvement had been made by each pupil over his previous performance. Questions that the teacher should answer pertaining to the collection of papers from each pupil could be the following:
   (a) Is there evidence that the pupil is forming letters which make up words and sentences better now than formerly?
   (b) Does he space letters and words properly so effective communication takes place?
   (c) Is the child improving over previous efforts in alignment of letters, words, and sentences?
   (d) Is there proper slant of letters whether it is either manuscript or cursive writing so that effective communication is not hindered?
   (e) Does the child have a neat and tidy paper when the writing activity has been completed?
3. Pupil self-evaluation. Each pupil should be encouraged to evaluate his own achievement in the area of handwriting. Pupils can look at their own folders (evaluation suggestion number two) and determine if progress is being made in handwriting.

   Teacher-pupil planning could take place to develop appropriate criteria or standards for pupils to follow in handwriting. Pupils could evaluate their own finished writing product in terms of these criteria. Reputable writing booklets published by textbook companies could be utilized by pupils in evaluating their own achievement in areas such as letter formation, spacing, alignment, slant, and neatness.

Pupils under teacher guidance could view handwriting samples of pupils flashed on a screen using the opaque projector. (An atmosphere of respect and learning should prevail in all classrooms.) Pupils are guided to evaluate the quality of handwriting of papers exhibited. The purpose of this activity would be to help pupils achieve at an optimum rate in handwriting and not to negatively criticize the efforts of others.

Pupils can also evaluate their own achievement in handwriting by proofreading their final writing product such as a completed business or friendly letter. Pupils can "catch" their own handwriting errors, in many cases, if careful proofreading is done.

4. Anecdotal records. From observations that are made of the quality of pupils' daily writing, the teacher can periodically record each pupil's progress in handwriting, as well as in other curriculum areas. The teacher needs to be as objective as possible in recording what each pupil is doing to improve handwriting quality. The pupil, who asks how to form certain letters or shows concern about the quality of handwriting by proofreading his work carefully, reveals certain attitudes in wanting to improve his performance over previous efforts. These would be examples of pupil attitude toward handwriting which could be recorded in the form of anecdotal records.

# SUMMARY

Four techniques of evaluating pupil achievement in handwriting could be (a) teacher observation, (b) work samples of pupils, (c) pupil self-evaluation and (d) anecdotal records. The teacher must evaluate each pupil in terms of continuous improvement in handwriting when pupils engage in functional writing activities such as the writing of letters, reports, outlines, summaries, reviews, and invitations.

# GOALS IN THE SPELLING CURRICULUM

Goals for learner attainment in the spelling curriculum need careful selection. Relevant ends need to be chosen. Each sequential objective in spelling should be attainable by students. Which goals then become salient for students to achieve?

1. an attitude of interest in learning to spell words is significant. Certainly, all facets of the learner and the environment being consistent, if interest in learning is present, student achievement is greater than if interest is lacking.
2. a feeling of purpose in learning to spell words is desirable. If students perceive reasons for learning to spell a given set of words, all things otherwise being equal, achievement in spelling should be at a higher level.
3. an attachment of meaning to words being mastered in spelling should aid achievement. Thus, each word needs to be understood in terms of definition and/or contextual use within a sentence.
4. skills in associating sounds (phonemes) with symbols (graphemes) need emphasis when applicable. Students need to be aware of overgeneralizing on sound-symbol relationships when the association is not warranted.
5. use of words mastered from a spelling list must be emphasized in functional writing. Any set of words studied by learners in a spelling lesson may be utilized in writing business letters, friendly letters, poems, plays, stories, announcements, notes of appreciation, as well as letters of sympathy.
6. use of linguistic elements in spelling is vital. In a given set of spelling words. rhyme may be inherent such as in the following which

possess a definite pattern: bat, cat, hat, fat, mat, pat, and vat. Thus, an initial consonant is changed and a new word results, e.g. bat - cat. Linguistic elements may not be as obvious as in the following set: cable, rule, settle, meddle, and little. Each of these words contains the consistent le ending.

7. diagnosis of errors made in spelling needs to be identified. Why does a learner misspell one or more words?
    (a) a human error was made which does not occur consistently.
    (b) carelessness was involved in attempting to spell words.
    (c) handwriting errors made for spelling errors, e.g. the cursive lower case "t" was not crossed and contained a loop, making the letter appear as an "l".
    (d) inadequate attention is given in using phonics where a grapheme-phoneme relationship is in evidence in words being spelled.

Learners need to become proficient in spelling to become increasingly competent in written communication.

## SCOPE IN THE SPELLING CURRICULUM

A relevant problem for educators to solve pertains to determining scope (breadth) in the spelling curriculum. Which words then should pupils master in spelling?

### Predetermined Word Lists

Numerous studies have been made of spelling words most frequently used by pupils in functional writing situations. For example, in the Fitzgerald Study, spelling words utilized by pupils most frequently on the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade levels were identified. If frequently used words are identified for learners to master, spelling errors can be greatly minimized in writing.

Pupils may be pretested and then study the correct spelling of a reasonable number of new words at a given time, from Fitzgerald's Study or other carefully controlled studies. A post-test should be given to notice if mastery learning has occurred. The test, study, test procedure in teaching spelling may be utilized again and again. It is important to assist pupils to pronounce correctly and attach meaning to each new word. Learners should also be able to use each new spelling word correctly in a sentence.

Studies of functional spelling words have been identified and predetermined for pupils to master. Hopefully, a variety of stimulating experiences may be provided to assist pupils in learning to spell words correctly selected from carefully designed research studies.

Advantages given by language arts specialists in using relevant spelling words identified in research studies might well be the following;

1. Scientific studies can be made of vital spelling words which all pupils should master to develop proficiency in writing.

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[1] James A. Fitzgerald, A Basic Life Vocabulary, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Bruce Publishing Company, 1951.

2. Trivia spelling words can be weeded out of the curriculum when objectively determined lists are identified by researchers.
3. Useful spelling words for pupil mastery can be derived from carefully planned research studies.

One method, among others, in determining scope in the spelling curriculum pertains to studying and enumerating spelling words commonly used by a large number of pupils in functional writing experiences. The identified spelling words may then be mastered by pupils in the spelling curriculum.

## Pupil-Teacher Planning

The involved pupil with teacher guidance may plan a list of words for the former to learn to spell. Spelling words selected are vital to master in a specific activity or experience. For example, if pupil A is wanting to write a friendly letter to a relative or friend in another city, selected spelling words are relevant to use in the writing experience. Among others, these words may be the following: present, birthday, party, friends, prizes, wrapping, theater, and favors. The number of words to master within a given interval of time needs to be reasonable and achievable. Each pupil with teacher guidance may then plan a specific set of words to master in the spelling curriculum. Sequential planned lists should aid each learner to become a better speller. The total number of words mastered in spelling represents the scope or breadth of the spelling curriculum. The order in achieving mastery of each set of spelling words pertains to determining sequence. For optimal achievement to occur, pupils need to experience sequential learnings.

Advantages given for emphasizing pupil-teacher planning in determining scope and sequence in spelling include the following:

1. Each pupil has unique needs to meet. Thus, a specific set of

spelling words needs to be in the offing for each learner.

2. The involved learner is in the best position to assist in determining which are functional spelling words to master.
3. Interest and purpose in learning may well come about when learners perceive relevance in terms of what is being learned.

### Units of Study and the Spelling Curriculum

Spelling may be correlated with other curriculum areas in the school/class setting. For example, if pupils are studying a unit on "Plants and Animals," the following might become relevant spelling words for pupils to master: growth, seeds, reproduce, roots, leaves, vertebrates, and invertebrates. The number of words a pupil is to learn to spell depends upon his/her present achievement level. If pupil A can master the correct spelling of seven words in a five day cycle, the teacher has a gauge to use to measure learner progress. After correctly spelling seven words per week, the pupil may be challenged to increase the number of words to be spelled correctly within a week. Feelings of success might well motivate each pupil to achieve at a higher optimal level. Adequate provision needs to be made for slow, average, and fast achievers.

Words which pupils are to learn to spell correctly from ongoing units of study should be important and useful. Unimportant words should be omitted. Reasons given for emphasizing a correlated spelling curriculum include the following:

1. Knowledge perceived as being related is retained more adequately as compared to isolated items. Spelling words coming from diverse units of study in social studies, science, mathematics and reading truly reflects correlation in the curriculum.

2. Pupils may study selected concepts in depth if reading and spelling of each concept is emphasized in any resource unit. Depth study assists in retaining learnings longer as compared survey means of acquiring content.

## The Spelling Textbook and the Learner

Reputable spelling textbooks are utilized in many classrooms in helping pupils to learn to spell words correctly. Inherent in these textbooks are lists of spelling words to master on a weekly basis for a given set of pupils. There also are diverse learning activities to help pupils learn to spell each word correctly in the list. The learning activities are varied to provide for individual differences.

Utilization of spelling textbooks is a rather traditional means in assisting pupils to learn to spell words correctly. Reputable textbooks have endured in space and time in the school curriculum.

Reasons given for using reputable textbooks in the spelling curriculum to provide scope include the following:

1. Writers of textbooks have spent much time and effort in determining objectives, learning activities, and evaluation procedures. They are specialists in their academic area of specialty and are in an excellent position to determine which words pupils should master in spelling.
2. Publishing companies have spent much money in developing and promoting their textbooks.
3. Textbook selection committees comprised of teachers, principals, and supervisors in schools have ample opportunities to evaluate each proposed book and make ultimate choices based on relevant criteria.
4. Research results provide input into developing lists of words, as

well as learning activities, in reputable spelling textbooks.

## In Summary

Teachers, principals, and supervisors need to study, analyze, and adopt a justifiable approach in the teaching of spelling. Criteria used to justify the selection of a specific means of teaching spelling should include the following:

1. Experiences for pupils should be interesting and meaningful.
2. Learners should perceive purpose and achieve optimally in the spelling curriculum.

## SPELLING IN THE CURRICULUM

Correct spelling of words needs adequate emphasis in teaching-learning situations. Why? Proficient communication is aided when written or typed content contains words which are correctly spelled. A quality language arts curriculum then must place thorough emphasis in aiding students to spell words correctly.

### Criteria for a Quality Spelling Program

Whatever decisions are made in life, standards or criteria are utilized. In teaching and learning situations, the teacher needs to:

1. select worthwhile goals for students to attain. Trivia must be omitted in the curriculum. In spelling, the words students are to master need to be significant presently, as well as in the future. There is much for each to learn. It behooves the instructor to choose carefully those words for learners to spell correctly which are salient and relevant.

2. emphasize the concept of balance in the curriculum. Thus, in spelling pupils need to develop vital understandings, as well as skills and attitudes. All three kinds of objectives need to be stressed. Understanding goals are not adequate in and of themselves, such as learners acquiring facts, concepts, and generalizations related directly to definitions or meanings of spelling words. Rather, skills (utilizing the newly mastered spelling words in functional writing) and attitudes (positive feelings in wanting to learn to spell words correctly) are equally significant goals. Skills then pertain to the use of what has been achieved within the framework of understanding goals. Attitudes reveal a desire to increase the levels of understanding and skills.

3. guide pupils to perceive purpose or reasons for mastering a given set of spelling words. When inductive methods are utilized, the teacher guides students in discovering reasons for learning to spell selected words accurately. With a deductive method, the language arts instructor explains reasons as to why students need to learn to spell words correctly within a spelling unit. In using extrinsic rewards to aid students to perceive purpose in spelling, awards are announced ahead of time as to the number of words a learner needs to spell correctly in order to receive a prize, a badge, or certificate for achievement. Exhortation may also be used by the teacher to promote perceived purpose. Thus, the teacher stresses the importance of learning to spell words correctly. However, reasons are not given. With exhortation the teacher could say, "It's very important for you to learn to spell these words correctly in unit one in our spelling textbook."

The teacher needs to utilize the four above neamed means of guiding students to perceive purpose early in a spelling unit as well as frequently.

Norton[1] wrote:

> Many current articles deal with the writing crisis in American schools. Poor spelling is often cited as a major problem with children's writing. The school program must help students learn to spell the words they need to know; provide instruction in reliable spelling generalizations; develop an understanding of word meanings and vocabulary; equip the speller with more than one strategy for spelling-word attack; incorporate spelling into all areas of the curriculum; proceed from sound diagnostic evaluation; and provide for the development of motivation, positive student attitudes and sound habits for studying spelling and proofreading.
>
> Diagnostic approaches to spelling instruction stress the placement of students on appropriate spelling instructional levels. In addition to instructional placement, the diagnostic teacher also analyzes the types of errors a child makes in writing. This information is used to individualize the spelling program for each child. Informal tests for spelling placement, spelling generalizations, and error analysis can be developed by the classroom teacher.
>
> Spelling words are selected according to several different criteria. The frequency-of-use approach stresses that spelling instruction should be based on the words that are the most frequently used. Consequently, it is believed that words most frequently used in writing should be taught first, words commonly used by children in a specific grade should be taught in that grade, and words needed in other content areas should be taught in the appropriate grade. Another quite different selection criterion emphasizes the phonic regularity of words. The words selected for this approach would follow a consistent spelling pattern. Some linguists and psycholinguists also stress the consistency of spelling patterns in words of similar meanings. Thus, spelling instruction should allow students to compare, contrast, and categorize words according to root words, word origins, and similarities in structural patterns.
>
> Several techniques have proven valuable in a developmental approach to spelling instruction. The corrected-test method allows immediate feedback, and liberates students from the systematic study of words already mastered. The self-study method allows students to master their own individualized spelling words. An inductive approach to teaching spelling generalizations allows students to discover and use the reliable spelling generalizations.
>
> Remedial spelling approaches have been developed for the more disabled speller. The Fernald approach has been useful with learning disabled children. In this multisensory method, the child looks at the word, traces the word, then writes the word without looking at it. Spelling games are useful for reinforcing and motivating the remedial spelling student. Spelling should not, however, be taught as an isolated subject. Students, whether remedial, regular developmental, or gifted, require many opportunities to use spelling in meaningful situations.

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[1] Donna E. Norton, The Effective Teaching of Language Arts. Second ed. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1985, pages 208-210.

4. choose a variety of interesting learning activities for students. To achieve interest within learners, diverse activities need to be in the offing. The experiences may include

(a) activities contained in spelling textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets.

(b) Commercial and teacher developed games.

(c) crossword puzzles in which the list being studied in spelling provides answers for the vertical and horizontal lines.

(d) computerized drill, practice, and games.

(e) spelling bees where competition is wholesome and educational.

(f) purposeful, practical experiences including writing friendly and business letters, announcements, plays, poems, stories, and skits.

(g) pantomimes, creative dramatics, and formal dramatizations.

5. evaluate student achievement comprehensively. Diverse procedures need to be utilized to appraise learner progress. The evaluation procedures may include

(a) teacher developed tests.

(b) standardized tests.

(c) learner abilities to spell words correctly within the framework of functional writing situations.

(d) weekly results from students being tested on lists of words contained in spelling textbooks being utilized in the classroom.

6. assist students to utilize correct spelling of words. Students who utilize what has been learned are less likely to forget subject matter acquired. The teacher needs to provide situations in which pupils may use that which has been learned.

Retention in learning is a perennial problem. Human beings feel and believe that an inadequate amount of content has been retained. Retaining the correct spelling of words is no exception. Teachers need to think of means and methods of helping students remember understandings and skills achieved.

Utilitarian theorists believe that useful spelling words need to be mastered by students. If students learn to spell words correctly which have been identified as being functional, errors in spelling would decline greatly. With utilitarian words mastered by students in spelling, learners might then study what is useful. What is useful will be utilized frequently. That which is used tends not to be forgotten.

Burns and Broman[2] wrote:

> Some spelling programs are based on the theory of social utility; that is, words are selected on the basis of their importance in the different spelling activities of life. There are a number of investigations about spelling vocabulary, but perhaps the most important one is by Ernest Horn. He studied letters of bankers, excuses written to teachers by parents, minutes of organizations and committee reports, letters of application and recommendation, the works of well-known authors, letters written in magazines and newspapers, personal letters, business letters—a total of 5 million words and 36,000 different words. From this, the most important 10,000 words were selected as basic words, according to these criteria:
>
> 1. The total frequency with which the word was used in writing
> 2. The commonness with which the word was used by everyone, regardless of sex, vocation, geographical location, educational level, or economic status
> 3. The spread of the word's use in different kinds of writing
> 4. The cruciality of the word as evidenced by the severity of the penalty attached to its misspelling
> 5. The probable permanency of the word's use
> 6. The desirability of the word as determined by the quality of the writing in which it was used.
>
> Horn suggested three criteria for introducing these basic words in the spelling program:
>
> The most important words should be introduced in the beginning grades and those of lesser importance in the later grades.
> The simplest words should be introduced in the beginning grades and the more difficult words in the later grades.
> Those words that are used often or needed in the curriculum activities of children should be introduced when appropriate.

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[2] Paul C. Burns and Betty L. Broman, The Language Arts in Childhood Education. Fifth ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1983, pages 242 and 243.

7. guide students to perceive patterns in the correct spelling of words. There are numerous sets or word families which follow a pattern. For example, first grade pupils need to learn to spell correctly the following: ban, can, fan, man, pan, van, tan, and ran. With a change in the initial consonant of each of the above named words, a new word emerges. Another, pattern of words for young learners to master in spelling include bat, cat, hat, mat, pat, rat, and sat. Inductively (by discovery) and deductively (through meaningful explanations) pupils need to observe that selected English words form a pattern in spelling. Even the following irregularly spelled words—rough, cough, through, and thought follow a pattern emphasized in the "ough" letters. Linguists are strong advocates of students noticing pattern which assists in spelling words correctly. Young pupils should study words which pattern in phoneme (sound)—grapheme (symbol) relationships contained in a family such as bet, met, set, let, yet, and get. In sequence, as learners progress through the diverse grade levels, words containing less of consistency between phonemes and graphemes can be emphasized such as bake, cake, fake, make, rake, and sake. Each of these words contain a silent "e" ending and might well be appropriate, as an example, for second graders. On the third grade, students might learn to spell words which gradually contain less relationship between phonemes and graphemes. These include my, pie, sigh, island, aisle, rye, and ride. Each of the above named words contains a long ī sound as a linguistic element. As a final example, sixth grades might well learn to spell words which pattern with the vowel sound as in the word blue. The letters "ue" in sound pattern with to, too, two, rheumetism, flu, new, and soon. There are

seventeen diverse ways to spell the same sound as represented by the letters "ue" in the word blue.

Stewig[3] wrote:

> Having children experience patterns in spelling is not the complete task, however. As they progress through the spelling program, they must be exposed to the idea that in addition to patterns, there are exceptions. The danger in any generalization is that the pattern may be overextended or applied to words for which it is inappropriate. Much inaccurate spelling results from overzealous application of generalizations. The child who spells bizzy (for busy), honer (for honor), and ankshus (for anxious) is only trying to apply what he or she has learned.
>
> Trying to explain the logic behind some of these exceptions is largely futile; many exceptions must simply be learned on a rote basis. For example, children are often taught the pattern: When words begin with an initial /k/ sound, they are spelled with the letter K when the letters i or e follow, and are spelled with the letter C in all other cases. The alert child will soon notice, however, that there are exceptions. In such words as chaos, character, and chorus, the initial ch spelling is necessary to represent the initial /k/ sound. This is because such words are borrowings from the original Greek spelling, with the ch- retained, instead of modified to fit the more general English system (Corcoran, 1970). Does this make sense? Of course not, if one is searching for logic in a system that developed in piecemeal fashion. The child simply has to learn that there are exceptions to the system. While it would be more convenient for everyone concerned if some of these obscure borrowings were changed in written form to conform to the system, this is unlikely. Therefore, the onus of learning not only the system but also the exceptions falls on the child. An unfair requirement? Probably, but one which is unlikely to be changed! The teacher's job is, therefore, to make the learning of the system as palatable as possible.

8. assist students to develop effective ways in learning to spell words correctly.

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[3] John Warren Stewig, Exploring Language Arts in the Elementary Classroom. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983, page 336.

Petty,[4] et.al. wrote:

> The basic goal in spelling instruction is to teach children to spell the words they use in their writing. This means the writing they do in school and the writing they will do after their school years. Of course it is impossible to determine all of the words any person may need to spell in a lifetime, but everyone should learn to spell the words that are most frequently written. It is also important to encourage children's increasing awareness of the structure of their language and how aspects of this structure relate to spelling specific words. Finally, a positive attitude toward spelling correctly and habits which support this attitude need to be developed.
>
> Since spelling requires putting into written form words that are familiar from speaking, reading, and listening, two important abilities are needed. One of these is the ability to recall how words look—the words that the child has studied and those that have frequently appeared in his or her reading. The other basic ability is that of associating letters and patterns of letters with specific sounds. These two abilities become closely allied in the spelling efforts of most children, and both are influenced by the children's understanding of syntactic and morphemic aspects of the language.
>
> A good speller naturally must know the letters of the alphabet and how to write them in both lowercase and uppercase forms. He or she should know how to alphabetize words and how to use this knowledge to find the spellings of words in dictionaries and glossaries. He or she should be able to pronounce words clearly and accurately and to use a dictionary, including its diacritical markings and key words, as well as phonetic and structural aids to help with pronounciations.

Good spellers, no doubt, have developed quality methods in learning to spell words accurately. Those students doing poorly in spelling may need to develop methodologies which work in spelling words correctly. Which methodology might the teacher assist students in acquiring?

(a) each student needs to look at a word carefully prior to studying its spelling. The sense of sight must be emphasized so that configuration clues might be utilized by the learner. A student cannot master a set of words in spelling unless he/she attends carefully to each new word. Some words are longer than others. Selected words are taller or shorter as far as individual letters within a word are concerned. Thus, distinguishing features must be observed prior to learning to spell that word.

(b) students individually need to be able to pronounce each word correctly. Incorrect pronunciation of words can well make for spell-

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[4] Walter T. Petty et.al. Experiences in Language. Fourth ed. Newton, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1985, page 250.

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN SPELLING

Each student needs to experience continuous optimal success in the spelling curriculum. Which experiences might guide learners to achieve well on an individual basis?

1). A game board may be made. Congruent squares sequentially may indicate a starting point as well as an ending point. Square cards face down with a spelling word on each card should be located next to the gameboard. A pupil spins a spinner. The learner may move forward on the gameboard the number of spaces indicated on the spinnner, providing he/she can spell the word correctly on the card drawn and held by an opponent. If the word is spelled incorrectly, the learner does not move forward on the gameboard.

2). Spelling baseball may be played. Two sides are chosen. Congruent square cards, each containing a spelling word, are placed face down. The cards are placed in four piles, easier words spelled correctly allow the involved learner a single. Increasingly more difficult words, in sequence, permit the speller to score a double, a triple, or a homerun.

The first batter up may indicate if he/she wishes to try for a single, double, triple, or homerun. The teacher then draws the top card on the designated pile and pronounces the word to the batter. If the batter spells the word correctly, he/she secures a hit and moves to the appropriate base. If the word is misspelled or no attempt is made to spell it, the involved side gets an out. Three outs and the opposing side gets a chance to bat. Learners and teachers need to decide the length of the game in terms of innings.

3). A fishing game may be used. The teacher need to cut fish configurations from construction paper. A metal paper clip should be in the mouth of each fish. A stick with an attached string and a magnet at the end of the string can be utilized as a fishing pole. On each fish a salient spelling word is printed in neat manuscript letters. A student may then catch a fish from a glass bowl or wooden box. An opposing player takes the fish and pronounces the word to the catcher of the fish. The latter attempts to spell the word correctly. If successful, the involved student may keep the fish. The student with the most fish is the winner of the game.

4). Scrabble may be played. The game may be purchased or made by the teacher. If made by the teacher, squares one inch on each side, may be used. A letter is printed on each square, although the letters "qu" may be printed on a single square. There needs to be an adequate number of squares containing vowel letters, as well as commonly used consonants. Certain letters, if used in spelling a word correctly, may receive more points as compared to vowel letters and frequently used consonants.

Each student may draw seven squares. One person needs to start the game in spelling a word correctly. The number of points from all squares used are added for each word spelled correctly. For example, if a learner spells the word "room" correctly in laying sequential squares on a desktop. The "r" letter may have the numeral "1" written on it, the letter "o" one point, the second "o" one point, and the letter "m" one point since these are commonly used letters in spelling. Thus, the involved student receives four points. The rules of scrabble may be used from then on to complete the game. Wholesome attitudes need development whenever learners engage in competitive endeavors.

5). A crossword puzzle may be develped. Words used in the crossword puzzle might come from the unit presently being studied from a basal spelling textbook. The words may also be selected from science or social studies units of study.

6). Learners might secure as many spelling words as possible from a given word. Thus, for example, in the word "interdependence," how many words can be spelled using the inherent letters in any random order?

A variety of methods in teaching spelling should stimulate learners to achieve more optimally.

# IMPROVING SPELLING PROGRESS

Dr. Marlow Ediger

Pupils in the elementary school need to spell words correctly when engaging in writing activities so that effective communication with others can take place.

The elementary school teacher has as one important responsibility the development in pupils of an inward desire to improve their spelling. Optimum pupil achievement in spelling should occur when pupils are motivated in wanting to do better in spelling than previously. The following guidelines could be followed by the teacher in helping pupils to improve their spelling:

1. Pupils should "see" purpose in spelling. Pupils in the elementary school must understand why it is important to learn to spell words correctly in writing. The teacher could write on the chalkboard a paragraph with misspelled words. Pupils could notice how difficult it is to understand content when reading the paragraph compared to having words spelled correctly in the same paragraph. When pupils engage in a writing activity, such as writing a friendly letter which will be mailed to a friend or relative, words need to be spelled correctly for effective communication to take place. The words that will be used in this writing activity can become the spelling list that pupils need to master. In writing a friendly letter, pupils may use words such as cousin, nephew, niece, aunt, uncle, present, and birthday. These words, which could make up a spelling list, can be developed cooperatively by pupils with teacher guidance. Pupils would need to learn to spell these words correctly to assist them in writing of a friendly letter. Spelling text-

books may contain a list of words based on a unit dealing with the writing of a fiendly letter.

2. Pupils must sense that learnings in spelling are meaningful. Any word that the pupil is learning to spell must be preceded by his being able to read that particular word. The pupil, through a variety of learning activities provided by the teacher, needs to attach definitions or meanings to the word being studied in spelling. He must be able to use the words in a sentence (or sentences). The number of meanings a child attaches to a word and the number of sentences he is able to develop from using a specific word depends upon his achievement level. Pictures, filmstrips, films, and discussions assist pupils in developing meanings for a word and provide opportunities for pupils to utilize new words in sentences.

3. Pupils must feel that learning to spell words is interesting. Too frequently, pupils have been asked to write each new word being studied five or ten times each. If a pupil then writes the new spelling word incorrectly the first time, he practices writing the word incorrectly with further attempts. Instead, teachers need to vary the kinds of learning activities in spelling in order to generate interest and enthusiasm. Pupils can use the new spelling words in writing a story; they can then check their own spelling of words after the activity has been completed. Pupils can utilize words learned in spelling when writing a business letter which will be mailed to a specific destination. (There are many places that pupils can write to and receive free posters, charts, and other information which lends itself to units taught in science, social studies and/or other curriculum areas in the

elementary school.) Exercises in spelling textbooks further help pupils learn to spell words correctly as well as use the new spelling words in context. Many different kinds of learning activites need to be provided for pupils in spelling. To keep spelling from being uninteresting, teachers need to vary the learning activities provided for pupils.

4. Pupils with teacher assistance should diagnose spelling errors. Pupils may misspell words due to faulty handwriting. A child may not cross his t's and have a loop in them, making them appear as the letter l. Or the letter e is written tall making it look as the letter l. These making for spelling errors.

If a pupil pronounces a new spelling word incorrectly, his chances of spelling the word correctly would decrease considerably. He may then spell a different word compared to the word needed in the actual writing situation. Many words in the English language have consistency between symbols and soulds; a child mispronouncing such a word and spelling the mispronounced word phonetically would greatly increase his chances for spelling errors.

Words which have an irregular spelling (lack of consistency between symbol and sound) cause problems in spelling for many pupils. The child may be trying to apply a phonetic spelling to a word which has an irregular spelling. Or, he may not have looked at the word carefully to notice the proper sequence of letters. It is important for the teacher to assist pupils in determining why words are incorrectly spelled.

5. Pupils achieve at different levels in spelling. The teacher needs to provide for individual differences in spelling. If a spelling textbook on the intermediate grade level lists twenty new spelling words for pupils to master in a week, the teacher needs to set realistic goals for each individual pupil. Pupils with below average intelligence

and achievement level may be able to learn to spell ten to fifteen words correctly per week. Talented pupils may know how to spell all or nearly all these words before they are introduced by the elementary school teacher. These pupils need to be challenged to learn to spell important words from science and/or social studies units. Talented pupils with teacher guidance could cooperately develop a list of important spelling words from such a unit. These talented pupils could also study the spelling words from a text which is above grade level. Pupils of average achievement may find the new list of spelling words from a spelling text book on their own level challenging.

Pupils differ from each other in many ways including intelligence and achievement. The teacher must provide for individual differences in the classroom since different levels of spelling achievement exist among pupils.

# LINGUISTICS AND THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

The contributions of linguists in the language arts curriculum have been numerous. Through these contributions, a modified curriculum has resulted. Teachers of language arts need to be throughly versed in content and methodology recommendations made by linguists. The curriculum has changed much due to input from linguists in the language arts curriculum.

## Patterns of Sentences

Selected pupils enter the school setting speaking the English language rather proficiently. They generally have little or no knowledge of sentence patterns and yet effective communication on their developmental level is definitely in evidence. A rich learning environmnet must continually be provided so that learners may enrich their speaking and listening vocabularies to develop further skills in the oral use of language.

Pupils in the school setting need to understand and appreciate how the English language operates. As learners progress through sequential school years, they should experience continuous success in achieving relevant objectives in the language arts curriculum.

The teacher, alert to the present achievement level of each pupil, must provide stimulating learning activities to motivate learners in understanding structure and patterns in the English language. The easiest sentence pattern for most learners to understand generally is the noun-verb or subject-predicate pattern. The teacher can select a subject-predicate sentence pattern from an experience chart developed by pupils with teacher guidance. The teacher may also ask pupils to give a sentence of two words pertaining to a picture on the bulletin board or objects at a learning center. Contributions made by pupils must be respected. As an additional approach to use in having pupils understand sentence patterns, the teacher could write two words on the chalkboard resulting in a subject-predicate sentence.

The following illustrates the noun-verb or subject-predicate sentence pattern.

1. Lions roar.
2. Birds fly.
3. Boys walk.
4. Girls swim.
5. Babies cry.

In each of these sentences pupils may provide words which replace the verb or predicate. Learners need to be actively involved in presenting these words. Thus, the teacher might ask, "What else do lions do?" Pupils may respond with the following: "walk", "run", "jump", "eat", and "sleep". Pupils may then be guided to notice that the sentence pattern stays the same; however, other words have been utilized in place of the original verb or predicate.

In sequence, the teacher could have pupils think of words to replace the noun or subject of the sentence. In the sentence "Lions roar", what other animals might take the palce of the word "lions"? Pupils may respond with words such as "tigers", "giraffes", "dogs", and "wildcats". Pupils must have ample concrete and semi-concrete experiences when participating in ongoing learning activities, such as in viewing models and pictures of animals.

A second sentence pattern, not necessarily in sequence taught to pupils, might pertain to pupils developing understandings of the noun-verb-noun or subject-predicate-direct object pattern.

1. John threw the baseball.
2. Ralph held the bat.
3. Salley met her friends.

4. Nancy bought a doll.

In each of these sentences, pupils may present a word which takes the place of the subject, the predicate, or the direct object. The concepts of "subject", "predicate", and "direct object" may be used by the teacher when referring to specific words in a sentence; however, pupils definitely should not be forced to use these terms when oral or written communication is being utilized. Generally, pupils will attach meaning to and use these concepts in speaking and writing at the appropriate developmental level.

A third sentence pattern to be studied by pupils would pertain to the noun-linking verb- adjective or subject-linking verb- predicate adjective pattern.

1. The house looked beautiful.

2. The vase was decorative.

3. The owl was brown.

4. The candy was delicious.

Each of these sentences has a subject, such as the word "house" in sentence one and "vase" in sentence two. The words "house" and "vase" in sentences one and two are nouns. Why are these words nouns? They can be changed from singular to plural or plural to singular in context. "House" is singular, while "houses" is plural. "Vase" is singular, while "vases" is plural. The word "looked" in sentence one and the word "was" in sentence two are linking verbs. Why are these words verbs? Verbs are words which can be changed from past tense to present tense and present tense to past tense, in context. Thus, the word "looked" pertains to a completed action and indicates past tense; however, the word "look" indicates present tense. The word "was" is in past tense, however, the word "is" is in present tense.

Interesting learning experiences can be provided whereby understandings may be developed by pupils in a meaningful way pertaining to the following: "singular" and "plural", "present tense" and "past tense". For example, the teacher might have one boy walk across the front of the room. Other pupils could give a sentence such as the following pertaining to the dramatization: The boy walks. Next, the teacher may call for a second boy to come to the front of the room and join in the same act. The resulting sentence to describe the dramatization reads as follows: The boys walk. In learning experiences such as these, pupils may realize in a concrete, meaningful way the concenpts of "singular" and "plural".

Again, the boy (or boys) could walk across the room and viewers give the following sentence: The boy walks (present tense). Once the act has been completed, the resulting sentence might be the following: The boy walked (past tense). Thus, with a variety of concrete learning experiences, pupils may develop understandings pertaining to "present tense" and "past tense". The sentence patterns used in illustrating concepts pertaining to nouns and verbs pertain to the subject-predicate or noun-verb pattern.

A fourth sentence pattern for pupils to attach meaning is the noun-linking verb- noun or subject-predicate-predicate nominative pattern.

1. John was a coach.
2. Bill is an umpire.
3. The man is a grocer.
4. Sally is a singer.

In each of these sentences, the predicate nominative equals the subject of the sentence joined by a linking verb. In sentence one, John equals coach. In sentence two, Bill equals umpire while man equals grocer in sentence three.

A fifth pattern of sentence involves pupils inductively developing understandings of the subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object or noun-verb-noun pattern. The following would be examples of this sentence pattern:

1. John gave Jerry a gift.
2. George presented Alice a present.
3. Mark wrote Jim a note.

Pupils at Christmas time and at the time birthdays are celebrated frequently use the subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object sentence pattern. For example, at Christmas time, a child may say the following: "Daddy gave me a bicycle." Or, when a child's birthday is being celebsated, the involved pupil may say, "Mother gave me a basketball."

Sentence patterns that pupils acquire should meet the following criteria:

1. Responses should come from pupils.
2. Learning by discovery is to be encouraged.
3. Pupils need to relate sentence patterns to their own unique background of experiences.
4. Learners must attach meaning to sentence patterns.
5. A variety of methods should be utilized in helping learners attach meaning to diverse patterns of sentences.
6. Learning activities should be interesting to pupils.
7. Provision must be made for individual differences; not all learners in a class achieve at the same level of achievement.

## Expanding Sentences

Sentences are short, choppy, and lack description if the concept of expansion is not utilized in writing situations. The following structural sentence patterns lack expansion:

1. Boys run. (Subject-predicate or noun-verb pattern.)
2. Abe caught the ball. (Subject-predicate-direct object or noun-verb-noun pattern.)
3. The orange was delicious. (Subject-linking verb-predicate adjective or noun-linking verb- predicate adjective pattern.)
4. Curt is an auctioneer. (Subject-linking verb-predicate nominative or noun-linking verb-noun pattern.)
5. Bill gave John a top. (Subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object or noun-verb-noun-noun pattern.)

Each of the above sentences is complete and recommendable in speaking and writing. However, clarity in writing in many situations indicates the need for expanding each of the sentences. In the first sentence above (Boys run.) pupils might be asked to tell more about the boys. For example, what kind of boys were these? The following examples are given as possible learner responses:

1. Tall boys run.
2. Small boys run.
3. Tall boys with blue coats run.
4. Small boys in the yard run.

Next, pupils may expand the predicate part of the sentence. For example, how did the boys run?

1. Boys run slowly.
2. Boys run very rapidly.
3. Boys run with great speed.

A further question can be asked of pupils pertaining to where boys run. Pupils may give responses such as the following:

1. Boys run in the yard.

2. Boys run here.

3. Boys run around the building.

In the sentences above, pupils might think of their own personal experiences in terms of where they have run. Learners may also think of "when" boys run. Examples include the following:

1. Boys run today.

2. Boys run in the morning.

3. Boys run at noon.

Pupils with teacher guidance should have numerous opportunities to expand sentences using modifiers for the subject and/or predicate parts of sentences.

Learners inductively may also expand sentences through the use of appositives. Compare the first sentence with the second sentence.

1. Mr. Jones lives on Line Street.

2. Mr. Jones, our teacher, lives on Line Street.

In the first sentence, the subject-predicate pattern is in evidence. "Mr. Jones" is the subject while "lives" is the predicate. The words "on Line Street" involve the use of a prepositional phrase used as an adverb. These words tell where Mr. Jones lives. In the second sentence, the words, "our teacher", are another name for Mr. Jones. Thus, an appositive has been added.

Dependent clauses may also be utilized to expand sentences. Notice the following two sentences:

1. John likes to swim.

2. John sleeps much.

These two sentences may be written as one sentence, thus eliminating short, choppy statements in writing:

Although John sleeps much, he likes to swim.

In this sentence the dependent clause is "Although John sleeps much". "John" is the subject and "sleeps" is the predicate. The dependent clause does not stand by itself but makes sense when it is related to the independent clause. The independent clause is "he like to swim". The word "he" is the subject and "likes" is the predicate. Thus, sentences can be expanded through the use of dependent clauses. The dependent clauses are underlined in the following sentences.

1. If Jim can earn enough money, he will buy a new basketball.
2. The boy who works in the grocery store is our neighbor.
3. The dog that wore a new collar is my pet.

Pupils will realize that dependent clauses generally do not make sense by themselves. The dependent clauses add meaning to an independent clause. Pupils should have ample experience in expanding any sentence pattern

Pupils also need to have ample experiences when readiness for learning is in evidence pertaining to expanding sentences through compounding. Notice the following sentences.

1. Sally sings.
2. Sally dances.

These sentences follow the subject-predicate pattern. Monotonous writing is in evidence if all written work consisted of short sentences. The two sentences may be rewritten by compounding the predicate part: Sally *sings and dances*. Two sentences may also be rewritten by compounding the subject:

1. Jim played baseball.
2. Owen played baseball.
3. Jim and Owen played baseball.

Sentence numbers one and two above pertain to the subject-predicate-direct object pattern. Sentence number three compounds the subjects of sentences one and two.

## Stress, Pitch, and Juncture

Pupils need to become thoroughly familiar with meanings and application of concepts *stress*, *pitch*, and *juncture*.

When words are pronounced within a sentence, differences in stress occur. Study the following sentence: "Hand me the toys."

If the word "hand" is stressed more than the other words in the sentence, this means that the toys should be handed rather than thrown or tossed. Stressing the word "me" more than the other words in the same sentence indicates that the toys should go to the person who is speaking rather than to any other individual. If the word "toys" is stressed more than any other word in the sentence, the emphasis is upon "toys" rather than a book, pamphlet, or other object.

Pupils should practice speaking using the same sentence in meaningful ways and stress a different selected word each time more than any other word in the same sentence. A tape recorder might be utilized in this learning activity. Pupils may then perceive how a specific sentence changes in meaning when a selected word is stressed mor than other words within the sentence. Linguists recognize four degrees of stress. Pupils with teacher guidance should practice using different degrees of stress when communicating ideas orally in speaking experiences.

Pupils should also have ample opportunities to practice using pitch in oral communication of ideas. Linguists recognize four degrees of pitch. Selected words in a sentence may be pitched higher or lower and thus change the meaning of a sentence. In some cases, words will be pitched higher at the end of a sentence when questions are asked. However, not all words are pitched higher at the end of sentence when questions are asked. Consider the following sentences:

1. Did you do any reading today?
2. Bill has moved?

In the second sentence, the ending word is pitched higher as compared to the ending word in the first sentence. Pupils with the use of a cassette recorder should practice oral communication involving interrogative sentences. Learners may notice the degree of pitch of ending words in a sentence. Pupils may also notice how other words are pitched within these sentences as well as in imperative, declarative, and exclamatory types of sentences. Attempts should be made in identifying different degrees of pitch of words within sentences.

Much misinterpretation of sentence meaning occurs when juncture is not utilized properly in speaking and writing. Consider the following incorrectly punctuated sentence: At the picnic jello salad ham sandwiches and milk were served. It is difficult to determine how many different kinds of food were served. The following might be possibilities depending upon pauses in oral communication or commas in written communication within each sentence:

1. At the picnic jello, salad, ham, sandwiches, and milk were served.
2. At the picnic jello salad, ham, sandwiches, and milk were served.
3. At the picnic jello salad, ham sandwiches, and milk were served.

Pupils should practice reading and speaking different sentences where proper placement of commas (or pausing adequately between words) is important. The meaning of a sentence can certainly change depending upon emphasized pauses within a specific sentence. As a further example, pertaining to juncture, consider the following sentences:

1. Leon, my cousin, works in a factory.
2. Leon, my cousin works in a factory.

In the first sentence, the speaker is stating a fact about Leon. In the second sentence, the speaker is speaking directly to Leon. Using the same words in a sentence, meanings can change depending upon printed commas or orally emphasized pauses within a sentence.

## Generating New Sentences.

Pupils should have meaningful experiences pertaining to how a declarative sentence, for example, can be changed to other kinds of sentences such as an interrogative sentence. First of all, pupils on the appropriate developmental level need to understand and attach meaning to a kernal sentence. A kernal sentence is simple and declarative. A declarative sentence states a fact. The subject of the kernal sentence is the actor, not the receiver of the action. The following are examples of kernal sentences:

1. John plays baseball.
2. Paul works in a store.
3. Josephine eats in the cafeteria.

In each of the above sentences, a fact is stated. Thus, a declarative sentence is in evidence. Also, in each of the sentences, the subject performs the action. That is, in sentence number one, John does the playing. In sentence two, Paul does the working, while in sentence three Josephine does the eating. Each of these sentences may be transformed or changed to a different kind of sentence other than the declarative sentence. In sentence number one which reads, "John play baseball", the pitch of the ending word may be raised resulting in an interrogative sentence. "John plays baseball?" A few changes may also be made in the original sentence and result in the question: "Does John play baseball?" To change the original declarative sentence to a negative, the following sentence can result: "John does not play baseball." The original declarative sentence might also be rewritten to state a request: "John, please play baseball." A command may result when making the following selected changes: "John, play baseball." Imperative sentences result when requests or commands are in evidence. Very few changes need to be made when changing declarative sentences to the following:

1. Sentences which ask questions.
2. Sentences which issue commands or requests.
3. Sentences which show strong feeling.

In the declarative sentence reading, "John plays baseball", the statement can be transformed to read, "John plays baseball!" The latter sentence reveals strong feeling and states an exclamatory sentence. The same words were used for the declarative and exclamatory sentences. The only difference was in the end punctuation marks. Declarative sentences end with periods whild exclamatory sentences end with exclamation points.

## Usage and Communication of Ideas

The words a speaker uses when communicating ideas orally or in writing are a matter of choice. Middle class individuals in society, in most cases, demand that standard English be spoken. However, effective communication also takes place with the use of nonstandard English. Contrast the following pairs of sentences.

1. They have completed their work.
   They done their work.
2. I haven't any money.
   I ain't got no money.
3. I ran in a race.
   I ranned in a race.
4. He is going to town.
   He goin to town.

No doubt, effective communication can take place when using either standard or nonstandard English. In selected environments, nonstandard English is accepted as good and sounds right to its users. In other environments, standard English only, is acceptable. An important item to remember is that the teacher accept all pupils as having much worth if standard or nonstandard English is spoken. Each person is important in a democracy. Respect for others is the heart of democratic thinking. Each pupil must be guided in achieving optimum development.

Teachers in the past felt that pupils using nonstandard English should be corrected on the scene so that standard English alone might be an important end result. Linguists have stated the following for not using this approach:

1. The pupil may come to feel that his/her home environment is inferior since nonstandard English is unacceptable in school.
2. Pupils cannot make rapid changes when switching from nonstandard to standard English in the school and class setting.
3. Negative attitudes are developed toward speaking and writing when teachers criticize the speaking efforts of those who speak nonstandard English.
4. Basically, it does not help most pupils in making desired changes to speaking standard English.

Pupils who speak nonstandard English can learn to speak standard English in the following ways:

1. by listening to the teacher who may serve as a model in speaking standard English.
2. by reading library books which utilize standard English in its content.
3. by listening to pupils speak where standard English is used.
4. by listening to tapes and records pertaining to content in relevant units of study where meaningful standard English is used by the speaker.
5. by viewing and listening to content in slides, films, and filmstrips where standard English is used.
6. by listening to presentations by resource personnel who utilize standard English in communicating ideas.

Pupils can learn to speak standard English in school and yet respect, as well as use, nonstandard English in the home environment. Thus, usage in speaking and writing pertains to choices of words and word order that are made in communicating ideas.

## In Summary

It is important for pupils to ultimately understand patterns of sentences in the English language. These sentence patterns include subject-predicate, subject-predicate-direct object, subject-linking verb-predicate adjective, subject-linking verb- predicate nominative, and subject-predicate- indirect object- direct object pattern. Pupils should also attach meaning to the concept of expanding sentences. Sentences may be expanded through the use of modifiers, appositives, dependent clauses, and compounding. It is important for learners to attach meaning to concepts such as stress, pitch, and juncture. Meanings of sentences change when utilizing these concepts.

Learners should be able to change sentences in functional writing and speaking situations from kernal sentences to those involving the asking of questions, the stating of negatives, and the issuing of commands or requests. Pupils with teacher guidance need to understand the concept of usage as it relates to standard and nonstandard English in oral and written communication of content.

# GRAMMAR, THE PUPIL, AND THE CURRICULUM

Each pupil needs to study how the English language works. A learner may then be able to describe the operation of the English language. Linguists have made relevant contributions in assisting teachers to teach the structure of the English language. Hopefully pupils will learn to speak and write with increased proficiency after studying the structure of the English language.

Structural grammar describes diverse sentence patterns used by pupils in school and in society. If pupils understand and attach meaning to different patterns of sentences, the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing might be developed more readily. Each sentence communicated in the language arts fits into a certain sentence pattern. The balance of this paper will examine five sentence patterns used by pupils in the curriculum of life.

## Structural Grammar

Which sentence patterns are vital for pupils to learn? One commonly used sentence follows the subject-predicate-direct object pattern. Noun-verb-noun may also be used to describe the same sentence pattern. Notice the following sentences:

(a) John walked a mile. "John " is a noun and is the subject of the sentence. "Walked" is a verb and predicate of the same sentence. "Mile" is a noun and the direct object.

(b) Alice likes roses. "Alice" is a noun and subject of the sentence. "Likes" is a verb and predicate of the sentence while "roses" is a noun, as well as a direct object.

There are an endless number of names that pupils can provide to replace each of the above named subjects in the two sentences. Each verb can be replaced by selected words. For example, in sentence one above, a pupil may say the following:

(a) John ran a mile (c) John trotted a mile.

(b) John skipped a mile. (d) John swam a mile.

The direct object of the same sentence also can be changed, as is true of the following sentences:

(a) John walked a kilometer, or other metric measurement.

(b) John walked a distance.

A second sentence for pupils to study is the subject-predicate or noun-verb pattern. Examples of the subject—predicate pattern include:

(a) Nan swims.

(b) Arthur runs.

Pupils with teacher guidance may provide nouns which replace the subjects "Nan" and "Arthur" in the above named sentences. Learners can also replace the predicate with an endless number of verbs. Each sentence still maintains the same pattern, even though the subject and/or predicate is replaced.

A third sentence for pupils to understand is the subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object pattern, also called the noun-verb-noun-noun pattern. Examples of the subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object pattern include the following:

(a) Mother gave Jean a present.

(b) Albert handed Jim a baseball.

A fourth sentence is the subject-linking verb-predicate adjective pattern. Examples include the following:

(a) The dog is big.

(b) The vase is old.

There are numerous other nouns which pupils may give to replace the subject "dog", e.g. cat, boy, girl, plant, insect, and tree. The linking verb "is" can be replaced with "was". The predicate adjective "big" modifies the subject "dog". Many predicate adjectives may well replace "big", e.g. small, short, large, heavy, old, young, and spotted.

A fifth sentence for pupils to understand is the subject-linking verb-predicate noun pattern--The man is a plumber. The subject "man" equals "plumber". The two nouns are connected by the linking verb "is". Again, pupils may present additional nouns in place of the subject "man", a different linking verb other than "is", and other predicate nouns than "plumber". And yet, the pattern of the sentence remains the same.

Sentences, ideally, should come from pupils pertaining to diverse patterns. The school/class environment may provide content to have pupils study the following sentence patterns:

(a) subject- predicate (noun-verb)

(b) subject-predicate- direct object (noun-verb-noun)

(c) subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object (noun-verb-noun-noun)

(d) subject-linking verb-predicate adjective

(e) subject-linking verb- predicate noun

Interesting learning experiences may be provided in assisting pupils to expand each sentence pattern.

One method of expanding sentences pertains to the use of modifiers. Single word and phrases may be utilized to modify selected words. Consider the following sentence:

The cat chased the ball (subject-predicate-direct object pattern). Pupils can be asked to tell what kind of cat might one see, according to the above named sentence. Responses by pupils may include "large", "yellow", "gray", and "small". Phrases may also be used to describe the cat, e.g. "with a red ribbon" or "with large beaming eyes". Learners may also provide words and phrases which describe the verb "chased", e.g. "slowly", "rapidly", and "with great speed".

A second means of expanding sentences involves the use of dependent clauses. Notice the following two sentences:

(a) The boy played in the yard (subject-predicate pattern).

(b) The boy was tall (subject-linking verb- predicate adjective pattern).

The two sentences may be transformed into a complex sentence containing an independent and a dependent clause:

The boy who was tall played in the yard. The independent clause--The boy played in the yard--has a subject-predicate word group--"boy played". The dependent clause--who was tall--also contains a subject "who" and a linking verb "was".

A third means of expanding sentences pertains to compounding diverse parts. Notice the following two sentences:

(a) Alice sang (subject-predicate pattern).

(b) Alice played the piano (subject-predicate-direct object pattern).

Compounding the predicate part of each sentence, the transformation reads--Alice sang and played the piano.

Subjects of two separate related sentences may also be compounded:

(a) Harold swam (subject-predicate pattern).

(b) James swam (subject-predicate pattern).

Transforming the two sentences into one with a compound subject, the sentence reads--Harold and James swam.

A fourth method of expending sentences involves the use of appositives. Consider the following two sentences:

(a) John is a leader in school (subject-linking verb- predicate noun pattern of sentence ).

(b) John receives excellent grades in all subject matter areas (subject-predicate-direct object pattern).

The two sentences may be transformed into one using an appositive: John, a leader in school, receives excellent grades in all subject matter areas. The word "leader is an appositive and is in opposition with John.

## Stress, Pitch, and Juncture

Consider the following sentence with the underlined word receiving the most stress as compared to any other word. Bring me a napkin. Since the word "bring" receives major stress in the sentence, the speaker wants someone to bring, rather than throw or toss a napkin. If the pronoun "me" received major stress, the speaker wants the napkin brought to the self, rather than to others in the room environment. Should the primary stress be on the word "napkin", the speaker wishes a napkin to be brought rather than a fork, plate, or some other object. Linguists recognize four levels of stress. In an exclamatory sentence, each word may emphasize the highest level of stress, e.g. John hit a homerun!

Words in oral communication may be pitched higher or lower. Linguists recognize four levels of pitch. Notice the following declarative sentence: John is back in school. A speaker lowers the pitch of voice in concluding a declarative sentence, Using the same words as is true in the declarative sentence, one may raise the pitch of voice considerably at the end of the declarative sentence. The result is an interrogative sentence, e.g. John is back in school? The ending word or syllable in an interrogative sentence does not always receive the highest pitch. Notice the following sentence: Are you going to town? The word "you" generally receives the highest pitch within the above named interrogative sentence. The pitch of voice is lowered at the end of the sentence.

It is vital for pupils to emphasize proper juncture (pauses) between words (open juncture), as well as within a word (closed juncture). Words are joined together if open juncture is not emphasized. Selected letters or sounds are omitted if closed juncture is lacking. Adequate emphasis on juncture needs to be placed when words come in a series. Notice the following sentence: Mary, Ellen, Janice, Sue, and Margaret ate jello , salad, ham, sandwiches, and milk at the picnic.

How many girls attended the picnic? Five. How many different food items were served at the picnic? Five. The number of different individuals and the number of food categories served at the picnic is shown with commas to separate items in a series. In oral communication, items in a series are separated with pauses of appropriate length. Notice how many people and food items were served at the picnic in the following sentence: Mary Ellen, Janice Sue, and Margaret ate jello salad, ham sandwiches, and milk at the picnic. Three people, as well as three food items, were served at the picnic. The same words used in a different way may show four people and four food items served at the picnic as is true in the following sentence: Mary, Ellen, Janice Sue, and Margaret ate jello , salad, ham sandwiches and milk at the picnic. Showing juncture with appropriate punctuation marks in writing or pauses of proper duration in oral communication is vital.

## In Summary

Pupils need to increase their skills to describe how the English language works. It is significant then for pupils to study and understand diverse sentence patterns as well as means of expending sentences. In addition, pupils need to attach meaning to the concepts of stress, pitch, and juncture. Hopefully, understanding how the English language operates should assist each pupil to listen, speak, read, and write more effectively.

## GOALS IN THE ORAL COMMUNICATION CURRICULUM

Learners need to develop relevant skills in oral communication to communicate effectively with others. Which goals might then be salient for student attainment?

1. developing proficiency in discussion groups. Numerous situations in school and in society stress the significance of being quality participants within a discussion setting. Each person needs to participate but not dominate a discussion. Staying on the topic, and not digressing can emphasize productivity in discussions. Content needs to be presented clearly, concisely, and in a meaningful manner.

2. achieving competency in presenting reports. If a student is presenting an oral book report, he/she should

(a) provide sequential content.

(b) utilize suitable vocabulary terms, understandable to listeners.

(c) have subject matter well in mind.

(d) develop and maintain listener's attention.

3. introducing individuals to others in acceptable ways.

Thus, the introducer

(a) must introduce persons using a clear speaking voice.

(b) needs to know the names and selected items of interest about each person to be introduced to share with involved individuals. A conversion may then ensue after introductions have been made.

4. gaining skills in interviewing people. To become a skilled interviewer, the following are salient:

(a) have relevant questions well in mind prior to the interview.

(b) keep in mind comments made by the interviewee pertaining to responses to questions.

(c) clarify, when necessary, comments to questions.

(d) summarize main ideas prior to ending the interview.

(e) write down conclusions of the interview, after the interview has been ended.

5. achieving increased skills in additional oral communication activities such as in

(a) impromptu or extemporaneous speaking.

(b) presenting demonstrations involving a process to listeners.

(c) creative dramatics and formal dramatizations.

(d) a commercial or advertisement.

(e) reading orally to others.

(f) describing an object or process.

The teacher of oral communication needs to use recommended principles of learning in guiding learner achievement. The approved criteria include

1. making learnings meaningful to students.
2. providing for individual differences.
3. developing purpose within students for learning.
4. guiding learners to become successful achievers.
5. emphasizing attainable goals in the curriculum.
6. stressing self-appraisal of achievement by involved students.

Each learner needs to attain optimally in oral communication to be successful in school and in society.

## CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN ORAL COMMUNICATION

Which learning activities might be provided to guide learners in developing feelings of creativity to communicate subject matter orally?

1. Have topics for an impromptu speech on separate slips of paper in a box. A student may choose or select a title at random. After an appropriate interval of time the involved learner may present the extemporaneous speech to other learners in the class setting. The following topics are provided as examples:

a) My greatest accomplishment in life.
b) A difficult experience.
c) An enjoyable time.

2. Guide students to make a set of puppets and a puppet stage. Sack puppets take relatively little time to make. Sock puppets are more time consuming to make. Challenge a set of three to four students to develop a presentation for the entire class, using puppets of their own choosing. Subject matter for the presentation might come from a unit of study in history or other curriculum area. Each committee of students needs to plan relevant speaking parts for the puppet presentation. 3. Have students develop a creative dramatics presentation. Background subject matter may come from a literature unit or other subject matter area. Oral communication parts are not preplanned prior to the presentation to the entire class. Rather, each learner speaks as the need arises. Accuracy, comprehensiveness, and creativity are vital guidelines to utilize in appraising the creative dramatics presentation. 4. Implement a continued story activity in the classroom. Thus, the teacher states a few initiating sentences in the creative oral endeavor. A student adds a few sentences to continue the story. Additional

learners in sequence add content. Novelty and uniqueness of ideas are to be encouraged. 5. Encourage students to present creative book reports. The following are provided as suggestions:

a) Sell the library book to listeners by mentioning fascinating content.
b) Tell about the most interesting part of the library book to a committee.
c) Emphasize what might be changed in a book to make for improved literature.
d) Change a character in the library book and indicate the resultant consequences.
e) Develop a unique setting for the book.
f) Suggest a different plausible plot.
g) Compare two library books written by the same author.
h) Analyze a pair of library books on the same/similar topic written by two different authors.

6. Challenge a committee of students to state orally as many uses as possible of an egg beater or other object. Respect for the thinking of all learners is important!

The teacher needs to provide stimulating experiences in oral communication to guide each learner to achieve optimally.

# ORAL COMMUNICATION AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LEARNING

To assist pupils to achieve optimally, teachers need to follow guidelines from the psychology of learning in ongoing units of study. Individuals basically possess four vocabularies--listening, speaking, reading, and writing. There are interactions between and among these vocabularies. Prior to learning to speak, the young child listens to sounds, syllables, words, and sentences presented by others in the environment. Models are then provided in learning to speak. As pupils develop in the area of oral communication, the learner listens to content presented by others, as well as to initiate ideas. If the child has developed proficiency in communicating ideas orally to others, the act of reading becomes increasingly more sophisticated in achievement. What is/has been said is recorded in reading materials. Hopefully, the learner will also achieve sequential progress in writing ideas that can also be expressed orally.

The balance of this paper will pertain to utilizing recommended principles of learning in guiding pupils to achieve optimally in speaking activities.

## Purpose in Oral Communication

Pupils need to experience purpose in ongoing experiences and activities. If learners perceive purpose in learning, reasons are intrinsically accepted for participating in oral communication. Thus, if pupils are to participate in the making of introductions, the teacher can deductively assist pupils to perceive purpose in this activity. Reasons are then presented by the teacher as to why pupils should learn to introduce individuals in a satisfying manner. These reasons may also be accepted by pupils in an inductive manner. The teacher then becomes a good asker of questions to guide pupils sequentially to perceive purpose in the making of introductions. In the school setting and in the curriculum of life, introductions are made. Selected occasions, among others, requiring the making of introductions include the following:

1. A new pupil has arrived in the school/class setting.
2. Parents are visiting their child's classroom during Education Week.
3. A resource person is invited to the class setting to participate in a specific learning activity.

## Interest in Oral Communication

The interests of pupils need to be developed/maintained in ongoing experiences emphasizing speaking activities. Pupils who lack interest and zeal for learning may indeed achieve inadequately in the speaking arena. To develop interest in oral communication, among other means, a variety of speaking activities need to be emphasized. The following experiences may then be offered:

1. engaging in creative dramatics and formal dramatizations.
2. giving oral reports and making announcements.
3. presenting impromptu speeches.
4. participating in panel reports and discussions.
5. telling stories.
6. conversing with others.

Prior to participating in diverse speaking activities, readiness for learning needs to be developed within pupils. Background content must be acquired by pupils. Thus, learners individually have relevant facts, concepts, and generalizations to utilize in each speaking experience. Motivation, or an inward desire to learn, must also be in evidence. Motivated learners have a higher energy level to achieve vital objectives, as compared to the non-motivated. A teaching-learning strategy should emphasize appropriate initiating activities. A carefully chosen film, for example, may well provide pupils with needed models, content, and examples to spur pupils on in the area of participating in creative dramatics. The teacher may also provide an enthusiastic interesting model for pupils to follow in the creative dramatics domain.

## Meaningful Learnings and Oral Communication

Each pupil needs to achieve meaning in ongoing activities and experiences. Thus, learners individually can understand that which is learned to achieve relevant understandings, skills, and attitudinal objectives. If a pupil, for example, is to communicate directions in the making of a selected item or object, involved content and processes must be understood. Otherwise, a quality speaking experience, in general, is not possible. Learnings understood by pupils are retained longer and transferred to new situations more readily than those experiences that are vague or meaningless. Time spent by the teacher in guiding pupils to understand new learnings is time that is well spent. The facts, concepts, and generalizations contained in the directions must be meaningful to pupils on an individual basis.

To provide meaningful experiences, individualization of instruction needs to be in evidence. One can perceive of individualization of instruction in several ways:

1. Each pupil needs to attain stated sequential measurably stated objectives. The rate of achieving these ends will vary from learner to learner depending upon capabilities possessed.

2. Pupils individually may select the learning center and task sequentially to achieve optimally in oral communication. The task chosen at a given time depends upon the needs, interests, and purposes of the involved pupil.

3. Teacher-pupil planning may be utilized to select objectives, activities, and evaluation procedures in oral communication.

Providing for individual differences is a key end in teacher-pupil planning.

## Balance Among Objectives

The teacher needs to choose diverse categories of objectives to assist pupils to achieve optimally in oral communication. Learners do need to attain an adequate number of understandings objectives. Pupils then acquire necessary facts, concepts, and generalizations. Achieving understandings ends, however, is not adequate. Pupils also need to utilize acquired understandings. Thus, skills objectives are also relevant to achieve. In emphasizing skills ends, pupils utilize that which has been learned previously. A third kind of objective to emphasize in teaching-learning situations is attitudes for learners to acquire. Quality attitudes affect how well pupils individually attain understandings and skills objectives.

Certainly, each of these domains of objectives--understandings, skills, and attitudes--is vital to stress in oral communication.

## In Conclusion

It is relevant for each pupil to develop proficiency in oral communication. Each person in society interacts frequently with others using diverse kinds of speaking purposes. The school/class setting must assist pupils to achieve optimally in the oral communication arena!

# ORAL COMMUNICATION, CREATIVITY, AND THE PUPIL

Too frequently, pupils engage in speaking activities which stress conformity in thinking. Thus, pupils may have been engaged in learning experiences such as the following:

1. giving an oral report to the class using ideas directly contained in an encyclopedia.

2. presenting a book report to the class containing content as it was written in the library book.

3. taking part in a discussion where recall of previously developed learnings basically represents the highest level of cognition.

It is important for pupils orally to engage in creatively communicating content to others. Situations in life demand that unique, novel solutions to problems are in evidence. Old solutions may not work in solving personal and social problems.

Orally communicating ideas to others is important in the language arts curriculum. Too frequently, pupils largely develop skills in the area of writing facts, concepts, generalizations, and main ideas. This is important! However, adequate emphasis must also be given to develop pupils' skills to the optimum in communicating ideas orally to others.

## Speaking Activities and the Pupil

The teacher needs to structure the learning environment so that it encourages pupil participation in spontaneously presenting ideas to others in a stimulating environment. Thus, a variety of experiences must be provided for pupils so that unique, novel, creative ideas are an important end result.

Learning centers involving oral communication may be set up to guide pupils to become proficient in speaking. These centers should contain learning experiences which

(a) are interesting to learners.

(b) provide meaningful content for pupils.

(c) make provision for individual differences.

(d) stimulate and encourage unique ideas and products.

(e) guide pupils to perceive purpose in learning.

Thus, speaking centers such as the following may be developed by the teacher as well as through teacher-pupil planning:

1. A Record Your Voice Center. At this center, pupils may engage in practicing the speaking of selected sentences using appropriate stress, pitch, and juncture. Thus, for example, pupils may choose a sentence and practice stressing a particular word more than others in context. This learning activity may be repeated using the same sentence, but each time a different word is stressed within that sentence. The use of the tape recorder should provide feedback to learners. Learners may then discuss how the meaning of a sentence changes as a particular word is stressed more than others in context. Four degrees of stress should be emphasized in this learning experience involving oral communication.

Pupils may also choose a specific sentence and practice pitching selected words at different levels. With feedback to learners of the recorded voice, pupils can be guided in identifying four degrees of pitch.

Learners may also record their voices when a particular sentence is spoken using appropriate juncture at different places within a sentence. For example, pauses may be exhibited at different places in the sentence --

"The children at the picnic ate chocolate, ice cream, jello, salad, ham, salad, sandwiches, and cake," or "The children at the picnic ate chocolate ice cream, jello salad, ham salad, sandwiches, and cake." There, of course, are other possibilities for using appropriate juncture in the previous sentence. Pupils should discuss how meanings change within a sentence as appropriate changes are made in juncture.

2. Reporting a Library Book Center. A variety of library books need to be available at this center. These books should be on diverse topics of interest to meet the needs of individual pupils. The content should be written on different levels of reading achievement. Following the reading of selected library books, pupils may engage within a committee setting reporting interesting content of books read.

Creative ideas may also be presented by pupils when reporting on library books read. Thus, a learner may wish to present a creative ending to a library book, other than the conclusion given in the book. Or, individual pupils may tell additional adventures or present a different beginning than that given in the library book.

3. Tell a Story Center. Titles for storytelling may be written on small cards and placed in a box. Pupils individually may select one of these story titles and plan an oral presentation to be given to peers in a committee setting. There are many kinds of story titles from which learners may select such as

(a) modified stories relating to Paul Bunyan and Pecos Bill (tall tales).

(b) exploring a haunted house (mystery).

(c) being lost in a cave and attempting to find a way out (suspense).

(d) explaining how a lion became known as the king of beasts in a jungle (myth or legend).

(e) obtaining three things that are desired most in life (magic).

4. A Problem Solving Center. Pupils with teacher guidance may select relevant problems to discuss at this center. The use of audio-visual aids may help to set the stage for learners to identify important problems. These problems should be interesting, meaningful, and purposeful to learners individually. Thus, in viewing a filmstrip or a set of slides on the Middle East, pupils may be stimulated in asking the following questions:

(a) Why is the Holy Land area important to Jews, Moslems, and Christians?

(b) What possible alternatives are available in solving problems pertaining to the Jews and the Arabs wanting the same area of land such as the West Bank of the Jordan?

(c) What events led up to the present disagreements between Arabs and Jews?

A variety of reference sources including reading and nonreading materials should be available to learners to aid in attempting to gather data and solve relevant problems within a committee setting.

5. A Creative Dramatics Center. Pupils may, first of all, read a library book of their own choosing and dramatize the contents. Speaking parts may be developed as the need arises in the dramatization activity. Possible titles of books that may be dramatized could include

(a) Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak.

(b) And To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street by Dr. Seuss.

(c) Once A Mouse by Marcia Brown.

(d) The Egg Tree by Katherine Milhous.

Pupils having completed reading one of the above named library books would need to discuss comprehended ideas. Ultimately, these learners may engage in a creative dramatics presentation.

6. Other Centers. There are many other possibilities to develop learning centers involving oral communication. Thus, pupils may engage in speaking activities involving

(a) the making of introductions.

(b) the giving of directions.

(c) participating in discussions.

(d) explaining how an object is made.

(e) telling about one's hobby or hobbies.

(f) sharing an important happening or event with others.

## In Summary

Each learning center in the class setting involving oral communication should be attractive and appealing to learners. Pupils must find speaking activities at each learning center to be purposeful, interesting, and meaningful. Thus, pupils with teacher guidance should learn to communicate well with others using the spoken voice.

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## LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN ORAL COMMUNICATION

There are stimulating activities in speaking which might guide students to achieve more optimally in oral expression. Which experiences might then be provided for learners?

1. Assist students to engage in impromptu speaking. Thus, a student may select a topic from among others printed on congruent slips of paper housed in a box. The involved learner might then be allotted three minutes to prepare the related talk. Topics for the presentation might include:
    a. the use of alternatives other then war as a means of settling disputes among nations.
    b. methods of minimizing unemployment.
    c. nuclear weapons in a world of change.

After the oral communication activity has been completed, the involved learner with teacher guidance may evaluate the completed experience.

2. Guide learners to present novel book reports. Among other means the following may challenge learner progress:

    a. draw and explain one or more illustrations covering content read.
    b. pantomime salient generalizations covered in the book.
    c. write a letter to the author telling what was liked about the content. Share the contents of the letter with other students.
    d. write a play using subject matter inherent in the library book. Select other learners to present the presentation in the classroom.

3. Have students develop a continued story. The teacher may start a creative story. A few lines only, need to be stated orally in the beginning. A student adds sequential content to the story. Other learners in sequence add additional novel ideas. Within a reasonable period of time, the story should have a suitable ending. Students need to think of original content for the story and express oral content clearly.

4. Guide students to participate in classroom debates. Criteria for effective debating need discussing. Adequate background information needs to be possessed by involved learners to be effective participants. Possible issues for debate, depending upon inherent readiness factors within learners, include:

    a. the pros and cons of capital punishment.
    b. economic development of selected areas versus conservation of the natural environment.
    c. solutions to problems of inflation.
    d. abortion upon demand versus right to life proponents.
    e. legal and moral definitions of death pronouncement in situations involving utilization of life support equipment in selected cases.

Developing appropriate understandings, skills, and attitudinal goals is vital in learning activities involving oral communication.

5. Assist students to describe a process in order to complete a given product. Which processes might be relevant for the speaker, as well as listeners, to pursue?

a. the making of a representative food dish of a foreign nation.
b. the development of a model, such as a miniature car, boat, or house.
c. the use of renewable sources of energy, such as solar and geothermal sources.

6. There are numerous other quality oral communication experiences which need emphasizing. These include participating in discussions, making of introductions, giving of directions, advertising a product, as well as conversing proficiently with others.

Each student needs to be guided to achieve optimally in oral communication. Success or failure in life may be a relevant end result in developing proficiency or lack of it in communicating effectively with others.

# THE CHILD AS A LISTENER

No one would deny that all individuals lose out on gaining important ideas due to poor listening. The teacher can help pupils to become better listeners. This skill must be taught. Try the following and see if pupils improve in their ability to listen better.

1. Let each child decide upon an approach he wants to use to improve listening within other children. He may crush a sheet of paper on a table in back of the room while the rest of the pupils cannot see the action with closed eyes and heads on their desks. One of the listeners can say what made the sound. Another pupil may lightly strike a tumbler with a spoon. The other children in the class would then identify the sound with eyes closed and heads on their desks.

2. Many pupils have cassette recorders. For homework, they could record sounds in the home or in the outdoors. In class, students could name the sound. There are many interesting sounds for pupils to record such as a dog barking, a cat meowing, the clatter of dishes, a baby cooing, and a car engine in operation.

3. The teacher can take children on an excursion in or near the school grounds. A child could challenge other pupils to name the cause of a sound just heard in the environment. The sounds could pertain to a hooting owl, a chattering squirrel, chirping birds, and whistling wind.

4. For a change of pace, each child could write a riddle about a person, animal, place or thing. Pupils could then give the name required to answer the riddle. The following riddle could be written by a child.

I am a very strong animal
and live in the forests.
I have beautiful stripes and
am feared by most other jungle animals.
What am I?

Pupils must listen carefully to the riddle to be able to give the correct answer required as a response.

5. Pupils with teacher guidance could discuss ways to help the class improve in the area of listening. The discussion could end by listing these guidelines on the chalkboard. Cooperatively, the teacher and pupils could help to minimize those factors that hinder in good listening.

6. Pupils in a class could help plan objectives and learning activities for units of study. For example, in a unit on space travel, the teacher could help pupils decide upon questions and problems of interest to learners. Following the identification of these questions and problems, learning activities which provide needed information could be selected through teacher-pupil planning. These learning activities could involve excursions, slides, films and filmstrips, reading, dramatization, and the use of other reference sources. Pupils must listen carefully if they are involved in selecting objectives and learning experiences.

7. A listening center is important in any classroom. Here, pupils would listen to cassettes and tapes relating to different units of study. The teacher can write task cards to evaluate pupil comprehension in listening. The cards should contain interesting questions for pupils to respond to.

8. Last, but not least. The teacher must present a good model as a listener. Thus, the teacher would be a good listener when taking part in oral communication!

# HOW SHOULD LISTENING BE TAUGHT?

Two selected psychologies of education can apply to the teaching of listening. Good listeners can learn much content by listening carefully to the thinking of others and teaching becomes more rewarding if learners listen attentively to ongoing presentations. Less need exists for repeating directions, statements, and subject matter if pupils are proficient listeners.

## Measurable Objectives and the Listening Curriculum

Precise objectives may be used to assist learners in improving listening skills. After instruction, pupil progress is measured to determine whether each objective has or has not been attained.

Measurably stated ends need to be written sequentially by the teacher in ascending order of complexity. A learner needs to achieve an objective with measurable certainty before working to achieve the next sequential goal.

Learners ideally should experience success in achieving each objective. Careful attention, then, needs to be given to writing objectives which are attainable, neither too complex nor too simple.

The following are examples of specific objectives involving listening:

1. After listening to content in a cassette recording, the pupil will list in writing three facts and three opinions.
2. The pupil will say, orally, three generalizations stated in a discussion.
3. After listening to a set of directions, the pupil will follow these sequentially in preparing a food dish.

The teacher needs to select a variety of learning activities to assist learners to achieve objectives. Each pupil needs to experience activities which are meaningful, interesting, and purposeful. After instruction, the teacher may then measure if an objective has been achieved before the next sequential goal is emphasized.

## General Objectives and the Listening Curriculum

Some educators advocate open-ended goals in teaching pupils. Perhaps the most relevant learnings for pupils cannot be measured. For example, it is difficult or impossible to measure in a precise manner interests possessed by learners. But a teacher, in general, may appraise whether pupils are or are not interested in learning. Another difficult area to appraise is learner motivation. A teacher cannot, by any means, measure precisely how much motivation a pupil has in learning. Further, one cannot measure purpose in learning. However, by observing pupils, the teacher can obtain generalized data on pupil purpose and motivation.

General objectives do give direction as to which skills pupils need to develop in listening. Consider the following skills objectives:

To develop within the pupil skill in listening to

1. acquire facts, concepts, and generalizations.
2. think critically and creatively.
3. follow directions as well as to follow a sequence of ideas.

To achieve desired general objectives, the teacher needs to select worthwhile learning activities for pupils. Pupil-teacher planning might also be utilized in choosing learning experiences.

Ultimately, the teacher and pupils need to appraise achievement in the language arts curriculum.

The teacher may evaluate the quality of listening experiences provided by reflecting upon the following questions:

1. Did I select interesting experiences for pupils?
2. Were the experiences understandable and meaningful to pupils?

3. Were the activities purposeful for learners in the listening curriculum?
4. Was each pupil guided to achieve optimally?
5. Did I emphasize rational balance among understandings, skills, and attitudinal goals?
6. Were individual differences among pupils adequately provided for?

If activity centered procedures are used, pupils with teacher guidance may be involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating diverse projects. Thus, listening experiences might be emphasized in the following activities involving project development:

1. developing a mural, diorama, and individual pencil sketches.
2. making models, objects, and replicas.
3. engaging in processing experiences such as in making butter, ice cream, soap, and candles.
4. participating in creative dramatics, formal dramatizations, and pantomimes.
5. planning excursions and exhibits.

Each pupil needs to achieve improved listening skills in an activity centered curriculum. Learners may then be guided to answer questions such as the following:

1. Did I listen as carefully as possible to others in ongoing activities and experiences?

2. How might I improve personal listening skills?
3. Did I assist other learners to increase their listening skills?

## In Summary

Two psychologies of teaching listening are discussed in this paper. In the first psychology, the teacher might have learners sequentially achieve measurably stated objectives. After appropriate learning experiences have been provided, the teacher may measure whether a learner has or has not attained each measurable goal. If a pupil has been successful in achieving an objective, he or she may then achieve the next sequential objective. The ends are arranged in ascending order of difficulty. An unsuccessful learner in goal achievement needs to have a modified teaching-learning strategy.

In the second, general objectives are interpreted in terms of content pupils are to acquire in the listening curriculum. These goals provide general direction as to what pupils are to learn. A variety of experiences should guide pupils in achieving flexible ends.

# DIAGNOSIS, THE PUPIL, AND LISTENING

Good teachers must possess skills pertaining to diagnosing pupil deficiencies in learning. Thus, pupils may be guided in the direction of remedying the problematic situation following diagnosis.

Listening, together with speaking, reading, and writing, represent four vocabularies that are developed in the language arts. Listening is the very first vocabulary developed by infants; it is an excellent means of learning during an individual's life span. Thus, skills in listening must be developed continually within learners in diverse curriculum areas.

When learners enter the public schools, they have had many opportunities to gain facts, concepts and generalizations through listening. However, negative habits may have been developed in the area of listening. Thus, learner achievement may not have developed to optimum development due to being a poor listener. The teacher then has an important responsibility in diagnosing reasons for pupils lacking in the ability to listen.

## Factors to Consider in Diagnosing Ability to Listen

There are numerous reasons why a specific pupil is a poor listener. Looking at one cause generally is not adequate. Seeking multiple causes would be more realistic. Thus, the teacher must be knowledgeable of and be able to diagnose specific deficiencies in selected learners before remediation is applicable. What are possible causes for a lack of proficiency in listening skills?

1. Pupils may not have adequate background information to grasp content. Thus, it is impossible for many learners to be good listeners. It is imperative then that pupils possess adequate content to benefit from an ongoing

learning activity involving listening where new ideas are being presented.

2. Learners may feel that ongoing learning experiences involving listening are irrelevant. Certainly, pupils must feel that what is being learned is important in their own lives.

3. Pupils may not attach meaning to learning experiences involving listening. Perhaps, the speaker is utilizing concepts and generalizations which are too difficult for pupils to understand. Thus, the speaker's time as well as the listener's time is being wasted. Content presented should be on the understanding level of pupils.

4. Learning experiences may not be perceived as having purpose. The pupil inwardly must sense that reasons exist for an ongoing learning experience involving listening. Time that is spent in having pupils develop purpose for listening in an ongoing learning activity is time that is profitably spent.

5. Individual differences must be provided for in learning activities involving listening. Pupils must have ample opportunities to engage in learning activities involving listening in which a variety of experiences are being provided. Thus, discussions may follow the viewing of slides, films, pictures, filmstrips, and models. Discussions are also important when pupils take excursions and engage in reading activities. Pupils then should participate in diverse learning experiences involving skills pertaining to listening.

6. Pupils with teacher guidance must assess the quality of the learning environment in terms of meeting physiological needs of learners. Thus, ventilation, temperature reading, and general physical comfort are important in aiding pupils to listen well to ongoing learning experiences. The quality of the psychological environment in the class setting is equally important. Thus, a relaxed, supportive learning environment should be in evidence for learners.

7. It is important to diagnose selected pupils in terms of lacking the ability to hear content properly. Thus, what may appear to be poor listening on the part of selected learners may actually represent deficiencies in hearing. Pupils with a hearing loss should be seated as closely as possible to the speaker.

8. The teacher needs to diagnose pupil achievement in listening for a variety of purposes such as listening:

(a) to think critically.
(b) to think creatively
(c) to obtain facts.
(d) to gain main ideas.
(e) to develop a sequence of ideas.
(f) to follow directions.
(g) to achieve major generalizations.
(h) to develop conclusions.

9. The child's home environment may present extreme problems to the learner; listening to content presented in the class setting is thus difficult or,perhaps, impossible. A pupil may face grave problems in the home situation. He then cannot concentrate adequately on learning experiences involving listening. The teacher must understand and accept all pupils; provision must be made for individual difference.

10. Diagnosing pupils in the area of possessing needed word attack skills involving listening is also important such as in phonetic analysis, syllabication, and structural analysis. Following diagnosis, selected learning experiences can be provided in guiding pupils to make continuous progress.

## In Summary

The teacher must diagnose causes for deficiencies in listening on the part of pupils. Only then, can these deficiencies be remedied. A variety of interesting and meaningful learning experiences should then be provided learners to guide each pupil in achieving to his or her optimum in listening.

# COMPOSITION IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

The lay public, parents, and selected educators are emphasizing a return to the teaching of the three R's. The three R's -- reading, writing, and arithmetic --have always been important curriculum areas in the school setting. No doubt, the inferred intent when speaking about a return to the basics is for teachers to become more proficient in teaching the three R's. Thus, within the framework of the three R's pupils are to develop skill in writing content clearly and meaningfully.

When stressing the essentials or basics in acquiring skill in writing, learning activities must meet the following criteria:

1. pupils should feel successful in ongoing experiences involving writing.

2. learning experiences must be interesting for pupils.

3. adequate related background information and needed skills should be possessed by pupils to benefit from new learnings in writing.

4. meaning must be attached to new learnings being acquired.

5. adequate provision must be made by the teacher to help each pupil attain optimal progress in writing.

## Expository Writing

The teacher needs to provide a variety of learning experiences to guide each pupil in achieving to his/her optimum pertaining to diverse purposes in writing. Writing experiences should be an integral part of each curriculum area in the school setting. This is true of expository writing as well as other purposes in writing. Thus, for example, if pupils are studying a unit on "Living in the Middle East," they may engage in expository writing by selecting, researching, and ultimately writing about a specific place of special interest in this area of the world. A pupil or a committee may wish to write about one of the following:

1. the old city of Jerusalem with places of interest such as the Jewish Wailing Wall (the last remnant of the ancient Jewish temple built approximately 2000 years ago), the Dome of the Rock (a Moslem mosque standing on Mount Moriah completed in 691 A.D.), and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (built by the Crusaders after having captured Palestine in 1099 A.D.).

2. the capital city of Israel (Jerusalem), Egypt (Cairo), Syria (Damascus), Jordan (Amman), or Lebanon (Beirut).

3. agriculture, urban living, and/or manufacturing in the Middle East.

The final written product of pupils emphasizing expository writing should be accurate in terms of content and contain meaningful information.

## Argumentative Writing

Pupils with teacher guidance need ample opportunities to discuss controversial issues. When readiness factors are in evidence, learners based on research using a variety of individualized reference sources may discuss controversial issues such as the following:

1. rehabilitation versus punishment and the law violator.

2. involvement in perceived relevant wars or diplomacy to prevent or end disputes between and among nations.

3. full employment and possible inflation emphasis versus planned unemployment and receding inflation in society.

4. emphasis upon the free enterprise system as compared to increased governmental intervention in selected areas of life.

5. a clean environment versus necessities of obtaining adequate energy sources.

Solutions to each of the above named conflicts may be represented by points on a line or line segment. Thus, a pupil may, in controversial issue number one above, believe in rehabilitation for selected prisoners as compared to punishment for others. Ultimately, the pupil would engage in writing his stated beliefs pertaining to the area of controversy being considered.

## Descriptive Writing

Pupils need to develop skills of careful observation and to be able to write clearly what has been observed. There are many learning activities which may guide pupils to observe carefully and write related observations accurately. Stimulating learning experiences must be in evidence to guide pupils to develop optimal proficiency in descriptive writing.

1. Pupils may observe a frame from a filmstrip, a picture, a slide, or a transparency using the overhead projector. Ultimately, pupils need to write as clearly and accurately as possible what has been observed.

2. During an excursion to a farm, factory, shopping center, or a store, pupils should be guided to focus their observations on a specific object or event. After the observation, related ideas can be recorded. Two or more pupils writing on the same phenomena may ultimately compare ideas expressed in written form. Thus, learners may notice how perceptions differ.

Careful observation of objects and events can provide content for learners in diverse kinds of writing experiences.

## Poetry Writing

A stimulating learning environment in the class setting using a variety of audio-visual aids may provide the necessary stimulation for pupils in writing poetry. There are diverse kinds of poems for pupils to write.

1. Couplets and triplets. Couplets contain two lines of general uniform length of content with rhyming ending words. Triplets possess three rather uniform lines of verse with ending words rhyming.

2. Limericks. This type of verse contains a combination of the couplet and the triplet. Thus, in a limerick, lines one, two, and five rhyme (triplet) and lines three and four rhyme (couplet).

3. Free verse. Free verse contains no planned rhyming of lines. The length of each line and of the entire poem is dependent upon the learner's purpose or purposes in writing content in free verse. Thus, free verse is very open-ended in terms of specified content and style.

4. Haiku and tanka. Each of these types of poems stresses the importance of a certain number of syllables needed per line of written content. Haiku poetry requires a five, seven, five sequence in the number of syllables for each line of verse. The tanka is a little more complex in writing since two additional lines of writing are needed with seven syllables inherent per line.

The writing of selected kinds of poetry may become more interesting and challenging as additional ingredients are added to each type of verse.

1. Echoic sounding words can be included. Thus, within a poem written by a pupil, selected words may be included which make an original sound, i.e., "pitter-patter" (the sound of raindrops falling on a window sill).

2. The use of alliteration adds to the beauty of a poem. In using alliteration, two or more consecutive words in a poem would begin with the same sound, i.e., "Happy Harry"; "wild west"; and, "fabled flowers."

3. Imagery should ultimately be used by pupils in writing selected kinds of poems. Including similes, as one form of imagery, can guide pupils to use words more creatively in diverse kinds of written work. Similes contain the words "like" or "as" in making creative comparisons pertaining to people, objects, events, and things. Examples of similes pertain to the underlined part of each of the following lines:

(a) The man looked like a giant among midgets.

(b) The clouds in the sky appeared as pillows waving good-by to each other.

Metaphors have a similar use as compared to similes. However, the words "like" and "as" are not a part of written lines in poetry which include metaphors.

## Journalistic Writing

Citizens in a democracy should learn to read and comprehend the meaning of content from newspapers thoroughly. A well informed citizenry is important in a democratic setting. Thus, pupils in the public school setting with teacher guidance should have ample opportunities to participate in developing a classroom or school newspaper. Learners need to observe

# WRITING ACHIEVEMENT AND THE BASICS IN THE CURRICULUM

Much emphasis is being placed upon the basics in the curriculum. Many individuals perceive the three R's largely as comprising these basics. Thus reading, writing, and arithmetic are prized highly as curriculum areas by individuals in American society. This paper will deal with one of the three R's, namely writing in the school curriculum.

## Writing as a Basic

It, of course, is not adequate to merely identify which curriculum areas constitute the basics. Additional problems in this arena pertain to which objectives pupils should achieve in the writing curriculum. Thus, questions such as the following need identification and related solutions sought.

1. How much emphasis should be placed upon pupils learning how to diagram sentences? Do activities such as these guide pupils to become more proficient in writing?
2. Should pupils be expected to master the different parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, et.al.), as well as how words are used in sentences (subjective, predicate, object, indirect object, et.al.)?
3. How much emphasis should be placed upon creative writing experiences for pupils, such as writing diverse kinds of poetry, including couplets, triplets, quatrains, haikus, and tankas?

4. Should practical writing receive major emphasis in the writing curriculum, e.g. writing business and friendly letters, filling out job application forms, as well as writing thank you notes and letters of sympathy?
5. Should learning activities for pupils place much stress upon the filling in of blanks in textbook and workbook exercises, pertaining to such areas as agreement of subject and predicate, and proper tense of verbs? Do experiences such as these provide for a transfer of learning to those involving creative and practical writing?
6. How much emphasis should be placed in teaching-learning situations on structural grammar (e.g. pupils understanding diverse sentence patterns) as well as transformational generative grammar (e.g. expanding and transforming sentences)?

It is quite apparent that flexible guidelines for a recommended scope and sequence of experiences for pupils need to be identified by educators and interested lay citizens. Thus, suggested basics in the writing curriculum may be critically appraised and ultimately specific adoptions made. In determining the scope and sequence of the writing curriculum, the following problems need resolving;

1. Who largely should be involved in making these curricular decisions, e.g. educators, parents and other interested lay citizens,

pupils, programmers, and/or professional writers of language arts textbooks and workbooks?

2. Should the writing curriculum emphasize activity centered methods of teaching and learning, or should involved pupils be perceived of as being passive individuals in ongoing units of study?
3. How much of writing as a separate subject should be emphasized as compared to correlating written work with diverse curriculum areas, such as social studies, science, mathematics, and health units of study?
4. Should all worthwhile objectives in the writing curriculum be stated in measurable terms? In the utilization of these kinds of objectives, what emphasis can and should be placed upon attitudinal ends?
5. What kind of balance in methodology should there be between inductive versus deductive approaches in ongoing units of study in writing?
6. Which innovative procedures can adequately be justified in the writing curriculum? Should traditional approaches largely be minimized in the writing arena within the framework of the school-class setting?

7. Should diverse writing activities be pursued as they are purposeful (learning to write a business letter when selected items actually need to be ordered) or should writing be taught as prescribed in a scope and sequence chart?
8. How much homework in writing should be expected from learners at different achievement levels? Or, should the teacher largely encourage pupils to voluntarily engage in homework writing experiences?

## Concluding Statements

There are numerous issues which need resolving pertaining to what comprises the basics in the writing curriculum. Educators and interested lay persons need to identify and attempt to resolve these issues. Hopefully, the writing curriculum will be perceived by learners to be purposeful and interesting. Higher levels of thinking such as critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving skills should also be emphasized. In society, individuals need to think critically due to the explosion of knowledge as well as to think creatively since unique solutions are needed, in many situations, in attempting to solve personal and societal problems. No curriculum, writing included, should inculcate negative attitudes within learners. Achieving desirable attitudes toward writing, toward self, and toward life itself is indeed recommended!

# THE CHILD AND WRITING IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS

The teacher of language arts must assist in setting the stage for pupils to engage in creative writing. A stimulating environment for writing may then be in evidence for learners. At the same time provisions must be made for individual differences in the class setting. Pupils do differ much from each other in talents, abilities, interests, and motivation. What can the classroom teacher do to guide each pupil in developing maximum potential in the area of writing?

## Learning Activities for Children

Teacher-pupil planning is necessary to select learning experiences for pupils in writing which are

(a) interesting for learners.
(b) meaningful and worthwhile.
(c) purposeful on the part of learners.
(d) satisfying emotionally.
(e) on the achievement level of each individual student.

Writing centers may then be developed which harmonize with the above named criteria.

1. A Poetry Center. Here, pupils may write a poem from selected titles written on a task card at this center. The child may also select his own title for a poem. These poems may relate to ongoing units of study in social studies, science, mathematics, and reading. The poems may consist of rhymed verse such as couplets, triplets, quatrains, or limericks. Unrhymed poems such as free verse may also be an end result

in the writing of poetry.

Pupils may also utilize techniques of poets in the writing of poems such as incorporating alliteration, metaphors, similes, and echoic words in the written product.

2. A Story Writing Center. Titles for possible stories for pupils to write may be listed on a task card. Learners may also select a title of their own in this writing activity. It is excellent to have a set of pictures at this center for pupils to utilize to gain ideas in writing creative content. Learners, depending on their interests and present achievement levels, may select to write content pertaining to the following:

1. mystery stories and stories in suspense.
2. tall tales.
3. biographies and autobiographies.
4. adventure.
5. historiography and historical fiction.

Pupils in appropriate sequential learnings may engage in the following writing experiences:

1. choose a story starter from among others in a bowl at a learning center and creatively end the story.

2. select an ending for a story, from among others, and then write the beginning for this story.

3. pick a setting for a story as written by the teacher and complete the writing activity. The teacher should write an ample number of settings for diverse stories at this learning center; thus, pupils may select a setting of their own choosing. Learners may also write their own setting

for a story.

4. other elements that may be emphasized in writing include characterization and plot within a specific story.

5. write a different end for a specific story that has been read.

## Creative Writing and the Content Areas

There are many specific writing activities for pupils relating to different curriculum areas in the elementary school. Thus, pupils may experience the following writing activities in the social studies:

1. In a unit on the "Age of Discovery," pupils may write about a day in the life of explorers such as Pizzaro, Cortez, Balboa, and Ponce de Leon.

2. When studying a unit on "Colonization in the New World," committees of pupils on a rotating basis may keep diary entries through the entire unit of study pertaining to settlers living in the Massachusetts Bay colony.

3. Learners may write diverse kinds of poetry on famous Americans during a unit of study on "The Birth of a New Nation."

In the elementary science curriculum, pupils may engage in writing experiences such as the following:

1. Write up the results of science experiments pertaining to the use of electromagnets in a unit on "Magnetism and Electricity."

2. Write a story on what the United States would be like if engines had not been invented. This writing activity could relate to a unit on "Inventors and Inventions."

3. Develop and write several hypotheses prior to conducting (an)

experiment(s). The hypotheses, for example, could relate to what will happen to selected liquids, solids, and gases when heated.

In the mathematics curriculum, pupils could engage in the following writing activities:

1. Develop story problems of their own based on mathematical operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) being studied presently.

2. Write an account of present day conditions in the world if the Hindu-Arabic system of enumeration had not been invented.

3. Draw a unique picture using geometric symbols presently being studied in a related unit of study.

## In Summary

The teacher of language arts must use selected criteria in providing learning activities for pupils in the area of writing. Thus, learning activities must be interesting, meaningful, purposeful, and make provision for individual differences. Writing must become an inherent part, not only of the language arts, but also in social studies, science, mathematics, and other curriculum areas in the elementary school.

CREATIVE WRITING IN THE CURRICULM

These are selected learning activities which may stimulate pupils to write creatively. Which experiences might then be provided for pupils?

1. Have pupils listen to a musical recording and write a poem of their own choosing.
2. Write titles of tall tales and place these in a container. Let learners choose a title to write a tall tale.
3. Have pupils select a picture, from among others, to write a free verse. No rhyme of words and /no specific number of syllables per line is required in writing free verse. Each pupil may determine the desired length of the finished product.
4. Encourage pupils to choose a famous person in history to write a related legend. Legends written may be shared with other pupils in the school/class setting.
5. Record noise in the environment using a cassette recorder. Pupils may then choose which noise or noises to describe in writing.
6. Have pupils choose a specific word. Additional sequential words need to be added which possess the same initial sound. Learners might attempt to add as many words as possible to provide creative sentences involving the use of alliteration.
7. Stimulate pupils to think of new words which make their own unique sounds in the environment. Greeks in the ancient world provided the concept "onomatopoiea" pertaining to words which make individual sounds.
8. Assist pupils to utilize similies and metaphors in writing. When similies are used, learners make creative comparisons using the words "like" or "as", e.g. The clouds looked like a smiling giant in the sky. Metaphors make similar comparisons without the use of "like" or "as", e.g. The clouds, smiling giants in the sky, were shiny in appearance.

The teacher needs to set the stage with a variety of stimulating activities to guide pupils in creative writing.

# POETRY IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Pupils should develop a thorough appreciation for poetry. Many words are generally used in a novel and unique ways in poetry. Thus a study of poetry should aid pupils in vocabulary development. Of utmost importance is that pupils read creative ideas and thoughts when studying poetry. Pupils can then be aided in developing their own creative ideas when writing poetry.

Poetry comes in many forms. Generally, pupils have felt that rhyming words are inherent in all poetry. However, this is not always the case. Poetry may be either rhymed or unrhymed.

## Poetry in the Elementary School Curriculum

Poetry may be correlated with different curriculum areas in the elementary school. The teacher may have pupils study and write poetry as it relates to units of study in science, social studies, mathematics, health, as well as in other language arts areas. Poetry might also be taught as a separate unit of study. An ultimate goal for pupils to achieve is to enjoy reading and writing poetry. Poetry should not be analyzed where it destroys pupil interest in learning.

### Poetry Correlated with Other Curriculum Areas

It is proper teaching procedure if pupils perceive that subject matter from diverse academic disciplines is related. For example, if pupils on the firest grade level are studying a unit on the city, they might dictate content to the teacher who in return writes the resulting poem. Pupils must understand this kind of poem being emphasized in teaching-learning situations. The teacher needs to set the stage so that pupils have an inward desire in wanting to write a particular kind of poem. Using discussions, pictures, filmstrips, and/or slides should provide background information for pupils in desiring to write poetry. If first grade pupils have an adequate writing vocabulary, they may write their own poem. An interesting kind of poem for pupils to write is a couplet. Couplets contain two lines of verse. The two lines are somewhat uniform in length with ending words rhyming. The following are examples of couplets:

1. The city is filled with people
   And the church has a tall steeple.

2. The sidewalk is broad and wide
   The boy rides a bicycle on the side.

3. The children play in the house
   Where there is no mouse.

If pupils are studying an elementary school science unit on magnetism and electricity, the following couplet may be developed by pupils individually or in committees:

We made some magnets in the room
Then we cleaned the room with a broom.

Pupils individually or cooperatively may also write triplets. Thus, three lines need to be written with ending words rhyming. The three lines should be somewhat uniform in length. Again, the stage must be set for pupils so that an inward desire exists to write poetry. A stimulating environment must be present to aid pupils in developing background information for the writing of poetry. The following is an example of a triplet as it relates to and integrates with a specific social studies unit entitled "Westward Movement".

The forty niners went to the West
To look for gold with great zest
Hoping to gain much wealth at best.

Pupils may wish to write free verse with teacher guidance. No rhyming of words is required in the writing of free verse. In the writing of free verse there are no standards pertaining to the length of each line and for the entire poem. A writing center or the class setting could contain selected pictures pertaining to an ongoing unit of study. The pictures, of coarse, need not necessarily relate to an ongoing teaching or resource unit. Learners may choose and write about a picture. The written content could pertain to free verse. The following is free verse as it relates to a picture on farm animals:

The cow
can be a beautiful animal.
provides us with milk and cream.
eats grain and hay eagerly.
may also provide a good supply of meat.
is interested in the pipeline milker.
misses her calf much.
does not get along well with pigs.
is eagerly waiting for the long winter to
end and have summer arrive.
likes to roam in the shed with other cows.
does not like the big dog in the yard.
would rather be in a warm shed as compared to
the cold outdoors.

Each pupil needs to determine the length of his or her free verse. Pupils should be creative in thinking of unique ideas in writing any type of poem.

There are definite advantages in having pupils write free verse. Learners are not restricted in using rhyming words. Uniformity in length of lines also is not a restriction. The writing of free verse can be related to many unit titles in diverse curriculum areas. If pupils are studying a science unit on prehistoric life, the following free verse could be written by a child individually or in a small group:

The Tyrannosaurus Rex dinosaur
ate many other kinds of dinosaurs.
had serrated teeth.
was the king of dinosaurs.
was ferocious.
was taller than other dinosaurs.
lived during the Mesozoic era.
might have been cold-blooded like fish and turtles are today.

Limericks are an enjoyable type of poetry for pupils to read and write. Limericks consist of a couplet and a triplet. The first, second, and fifth lines in a limerick make a triplet. The third and fourth lines comprise a couplet. Generally, it is important for pupils to understand and attach meaning to a couplet and triplet before limericks are introduced. From an anthology of children's literature, the teacher may read limericks to children. These limericks must be chosen carefully to capture interests of listeners. Enjoyment of poetry is of utmost importance! The selected limericks must be on the understanding level of children. Learners with teacher guidance could select which limericks they like best. These may be written on the chalkboard or on a transparency. Pupils inductively need to arrive at meaningful generalizations pertaining to what ingredients are necessary in the writing of limericks. Thus, learners may write their own limericks once the inherent pattern is understood. The following limerick pertains to a unit on magnetism and electricity:

There once was a man called Thomas Edison
Who invented a bulb which gave a bright light in the long run
He liked to invent great things
From which America and the world benefits and sings
And made life easier, more enjoyable, and much more fun.

Haiku poetry can also be enjoyable for pupils to write. Rhyming words are not necessary in haiku poetry. Pupils, however, do need to be able to divide words into syllables when writing haiku poetry. The first line of a haiky poem has five syllables. The second line has seven syllables, followed by five syllables in the third lien. Haiku poetry may discuss nature. The following haiku poem might be written by observing rain falling in the out of doors:

The rain pattering
on the window with great speed
swish, slosh, swoosh, slash, spash.

Pupils need to be praised and encouraged to present novel ideas in writing poetry. Pupils should be encouraged to invent new words. The last line of the previously written haiku poem has unique words which give sounds made by drops of rain. Onamatopia is a term given to words which make sounds similar to those in the natural environment. Alliteration is also prevalent in the last line of the haiku poem in that the beginning sound of each word is the same. Numerous poets use alliteration as a poetic device in the writing of poetry.

## Imagery in Poetry

It is important for pupils to understand imagery in the writing of poetry. Thus, pupils may understand meaningful concepts and generalizations pertainging to metaphors and similes. This can be achieved utilizing approaches such as the following:

1. reading poetry containing metaphors and similes to pupils.
2. discussing with pupils meanings of metaphors and similes.
3. developing poems with learners that contain metaphors and similes.
4. having pupils find and read poems that contain metaphors and similes.
5. having pupils individually or in committees write poetry which contains metaphors and similes.

Pupils with teacher guidance might then write lines of verse containing imagery such as in the following examples:

1. The rain sounded like fairies dancing on the window sill.
2. The train roared like a giant in the sky.
3. The wind blew like a sneezing ogre.

In each of these lines of poetry, similes are used. Something is compared to something else joined by the word "like". In sentence number one, for example, the sound of "rain" is compared to the sound of "faries dancing on the window sill". In sentence number two "The train roared" is compared to "a giant in the sky", while in sentence three "The wind blew" is being contrasted with "a sneezing orge". The word "as" is also used in imagery. He came as a thief in the night.

In the case of metaphors, the words "like" and "as" are not used in making creative comparisons. Notice the use of metaphors in the following lines of verse:

1. The cat, a swirling mass of colors, runs in the yard.
2. The dog, clawing feverishly in the garden, finally found a bone.
3. The clouds were fluffy pillows racing across the sky.
4. The house appeared to float on faries' wings in the sky.

Otherwise, similes and metaphors have similar functions in making creative comparisons.

## Creative Writing and the Pupil

Creative thinking is an important skill and attitude for all learners to develop in greater depth as they progress through the school years. In every day living, it is important to think creatively so that one's own problems may be solved. Too frequently, solutions that have worked for others in the solving of problems may not work for us. Unique solutions in many cases are then needed to solve problems. Progress in American society and the world has come about due to individuals having been creative. Thus, progress in medicine, manufacturing, dentistry, education, agriculture, and other facets of life has come about through creative efforts of individuals and groups. It is of utmost importance for students to engage in creative thinking.

The teacher must provide a psychological environment whereby students feel free to explore and experiment. Learners need to feel relaxed in the class setting to think of ideas which are different and unique. Thus, a student can present a contribution which is novel based on previously acquired learnings. It is difficult to come up with ideas which are unique for all learners in a class. However, it is possible for a pupil to come up with original content on an individual basis.

Pupils with teacher guidance need to plan a rich learning environment. Students must have experiences which stimulate creative thinking. Stimulating bulletin boards, learning centers, reading materials, and audio--visual aids aid in setting the stage for creative endeavors. Student will then acquire subject matter which might be utilized to write a creative story, poem, essay, letter, or other worm of written work. The teacher must think of learning activities which will stimulate creative thinking.

Too frequently, the teacher has assessed student progress in writing based on spelling words correctly, demonstrated neat handwriting, using punctuation marks properly, and using capital letters correctly. Very little emphasis may have been placed upon ideas that students have expressed. To be sure, students need to make continuous progress in correct spelling of words, legible handwriting, correct punctuation, and proper capitalization of letters. Students may reveal their achievement in the mechanics of writing when they proofread their final written product. At the time ideas are written on paper, student may not be able to concentrate on the mechanics of writing.

The teacher must give careful consideration to praising students for being creative. Most students like praise for work that reveals improved performance. If creative products are praised by the teacher, students generally will feel that creativity is what is wanted and desired. If the teacher criticizes students' creative behavior, learners might feel that this is not an approved way of approaching learning activities. A smile of approvel, saying "that's tremendous", or "that's terrific", among other means, can certainly stimulate students in desiring to express content creatively.

There needs to be time set asside whereby students can share completed work. Students individually may perceive how content differs between and among finished products. When sharing thoughts, students learn from each other pertaining to ways of expressing unique ideas as well as creativity contained in ideas in and of themselves. They may learn about new vocabulary terms which can be used in writing as well as creative ways in which these terms can be used. Students may also learn about inventing words to use in writing.

The teacher certainly needs to be well acquainted with characteristics of students revealing creative behaviors. There are teachers who have confused creative behavior of students with misbehavior. That is most unfortunate! Teachers then should become well versed in approaches to (a) setting the stage for learners to exhibit creative behavior, (b) rewarding creative behavior of students, and (c) being highly knowledgeable about characteristics of individuals who are creative

## In Summary

The teacher must set the stage to have pupils develop feelings of desiring to express ideas creatively. A variety of rich learning experiences can aid pupils in creative thinking and creative writing. These experiences must be challenging and interesting. Pupils can then be encouraged to participate in a wide variety of creative activities.

Learners should have ample opportunities to engage in the writing of poetry. Learners may then write couplets, triplets, free verse, limericks, and haiku poetry. Pupils' ideas in creative writing need to be accepted and respected by the teacher as well as by learners.

# POETRY AND THE LEARNER

by

Marlow Ediger

Creative thinking is a major objective to emphasize in the writing of poetry. In the creative writing curriculum, each pupil should select the title, content, and kind of poem to write. An ample number of choices are then available to learners in writing novel, unique ideas. Thus,the pupil may be heavily involved in selecting objectives, learning activities, and evaluation procedures in the writing of poetry.

## Setting the Stage for Creative Writing

Diverse learning activities may be utilized to stimulate pupils to engage in the writing of poems.

The teacher, for example in a correlated curriculum within a unit on "The Middle East" may show selected slides to learners. The slides may stimulate learners to write creative content on the wall around Old Jerusalem, the Dome of the Rock (a Moslem mosque, completed 691 A.D.), the Western Wall (also called the Jewish Wailing Wall, completed approximately 2,000 years ago), and/or the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (built by the Crusaders in 1099 A.D.). A film, filmstrip, illustrations, tapes, and transparencies may equally well assist in setting the stage for pupils to engage in poetry writing. The experiences should be appropriately initiated, interesting;and capture pupil attention.

## Diverse Kinds of Poetry

With ample readiness experiences, learners may not only select the title of the poem, but also the kind of verse to be written. There are diverse kinds of fascinating verse for pupils to write. Choices may then be made by individuals in terms of the following kinds of verse.

1. free verse. The length of the poem as well as the length of each line is left up to the writer. No rhyming words need be used in writing free verse.

2. couplets. When writing a couplet, two lines of similar length with ending words rhyming need to be in evidence.

3. triplets. The pupil writes three lines of equivalent length with rhyme inherent in all ending words.

4. quatrains. Four lines of similar length is important in the writing of quatrains containing diverse patterns of rhyme. Thus, lines one and two as well as lines three and four may rhyme.

5. haiku poetry. The length of each line as well as rhyme is definitely not important in the writing of haiku poems. The number of syllables in each of three lines of verse in haiku poetry is important. Thus, each haiku poem should contain five syllables, seven syllables, and five syllables for each of the three lines.

6. tanka poetry. Tanka may well be an extension of haiku poetry. Two additional lines may be added to a haiku poem, each containing seven syllables in completing a tanka poem.

7. limmericks. A limerick consists of a couplet and triplet. Lines one, two, and five of the limerick may well be considered to be a triplet. Lines three and four make for a couplet. Many limericks start with the sentence: There once was ______.

Thus, there are diverse forms of poems from which learners may select as creative writing experiences. Free verse is very open ended in terms of emphasizing no rhyme, no syllabication, nor length of each line for the entire poem.

Couplets, triplets, and limericks emphasize the use of rhyming words. Pupils who cannot hear rhyme or feel restrained in creative writing when ulilizing rhyming words may wish to select a different kind of poem to develop, such as free verse. Creativity is emphasized when pupils attempt to use rhyming words in poetry writing.

Haiku and tanka emphasize utilizing a selected number of syllables per line. If learners cannot divide words into syllables, a different form of verse may be written. Creativity enters into the writing of haiku and tanka when learners are able to write a certain number of syllables for each line of verse. For any kind of poem written, uniqueness and novelty of ideas must be encouraged and rewarded!

## In Summary

Pupils need to have those experiences which encourage creative thinking. These ideas eventually may be written down in terms of diverse forms of verse. Pupils with teacher guidance need to have understanding of and attach meaning to diverse kinds of poetry.

Learners may also be stimulated to add alliteration (consecutive words containing the same beginning sounds, e.g. slippery snow ) and echoic sounding words (e.g. splish, splash, and thump) An additional element that should become an inherent part of verse is the use of imagery (metaphors and similies). When using similies in the writing of poetry, the words "like" and "as" generally are utilized in making creative comparisons, e.g. the horses ran like a flash of lightning in the sky. Metaphors make similar creative comparisons as is true of similies but the words "like" or "as" are omitted, e.g. "The clouds, fluffy sheep in the skies, burst forth with rain." Clouds equal fluffy sheep in the skies.[1]

A relaxed learning environment needs to be in evidence to stimulate pupils in the areas of creative writing. Also, pupils need to be ready for participating in writing any single kind of poem before its implementation in the creative writing curriculum.